

BP's Gulf of Mexico oil spill had impact on amusement facilities

Although oil spill did not hit all beach areas, lost tourism resulted in lost business for many facilities and attractions

Pam Sherborne

Amusement Today

Scenes of oil gushing from a broken well deep below the surface of the waters of the Gulf of Mexico were common beginning in the first couple of weeks after British Petroleum's Deepwater Horizon rig exploded on April 20.

The explosion killed 11 platform workers and uncapped a well that some reports now estimate released 4.9 million barrels of oil before efforts to finally stop the oil seemed successful at the first of August.

Photos of sunbathers on the white sandy beaches of the Gulf shores and in the background workers in hazardous materials suits cleaning up oil hit the news and almost immediately cancellations at hotels, motels, resorts, condominiums, and attractions began.

Tar balls and oil sheens seen on the pristine waters in some regions of the gulf scared away the one thing many along the Gulf coast rely on — tourism.

Even though it appeared the oil had stopped, as more tourists began to head back to the shores and more fishing areas reopened, from Louisiana to as far east as Apalachicola, Fla., Gulf businesses were feeling the impact from that oil whether or not it had shown up on their shores.

Amusement attractions were right in there with the rest of the businesses that rely heavily on summer visitors.

Confusion on which way the oil would track at the onset of the Deepwater Horizon explosion led to a few cancellations west of the well site, along the Texas seaboard. Jeffrey Siebert, communications director, Schlitterbahn Waterpark, said he did hear those reports. But, the Schlitterbahn parks in both St. Padre Island and Galveston Island were not impacted.

"There was some initial confusion," Siebert said. "But, both parks have held their own and business looks to be on par with last year."



When the track of the oil became clear, areas east of the well site started feeling the pinch.

"About 90 percent of our business is based on tourism," said Ron Hardy, an owner of the Gulf World Marine Park, Panama City Beach. "We are significantly off. We are down between 23 to 25 percent in the main part of our season."

Hardy represented one of the few attractions along the Gulf coast to speak publicly with AT about the impact. With so many claims against BP still being negotiated for lost revenues, some representatives from amusement attractions are apparently keeping their cards close to their chests.

But, when final numbers are in, it won't be a very good season for many.

"We were actually up for the first part of 2010," said Shelley Ragsdale, public relations/marketing, National Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, Fla. "Last year, our attendance was just under 760,000. We were on target to hit about 800,000 this year. Now, I think we will end our season in the low 700,000s."

This Pensacola museum, which opened in 1962, has free admission. Funds for renovations, maintenance,

and operations for the many educational programs come from offerings inside the museum, such as admission into the Imax theater.

"So, we are very much tied to visitation," Ragsdale said.

Ragsdale started to see the drop in May. It was worse in June and then more so in July. She estimated those two months were between 20-25 percent down from 2009.

The Gulfarium, an aquarium located right on the beach on Okaloosa Island, Fla., at Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., is down by 50 percent.

"We have filed a BP claim and we have filed amended BP claims," said Tammy Abrams, public relations, the first week in August. "We have been heavily, heavily impacted. And, we have had only a few little tar balls here and there. I was out on the beach yesterday and it was absolutely gorgeous. The waters were a lovely aqua color. It was just beautiful. But, people are scared."

No cutbacks have had to be made so far, Abrams said, but some budgetary changes were implemented. Those changes impacted the hiring of seasonal employees.

"We just didn't hire as many this summer," she said. "During these summer months, May-August, we make the majority of our income for the rest of the year."

With the facility located on the beach, water from the Gulf is run through a filtration system and is used in the tanks for the marine life. They haven't had any problems.

Chip Cleary, senior vice president, Palace Entertainment, which owns Big Kahuna Waterpark, Destin, Fla., one hour east of Pensacola, said: "On behalf of Palace Entertainment, it (the oil) has had a very large impact on our business this summer and on the Destin region. It is too early to tell right now what

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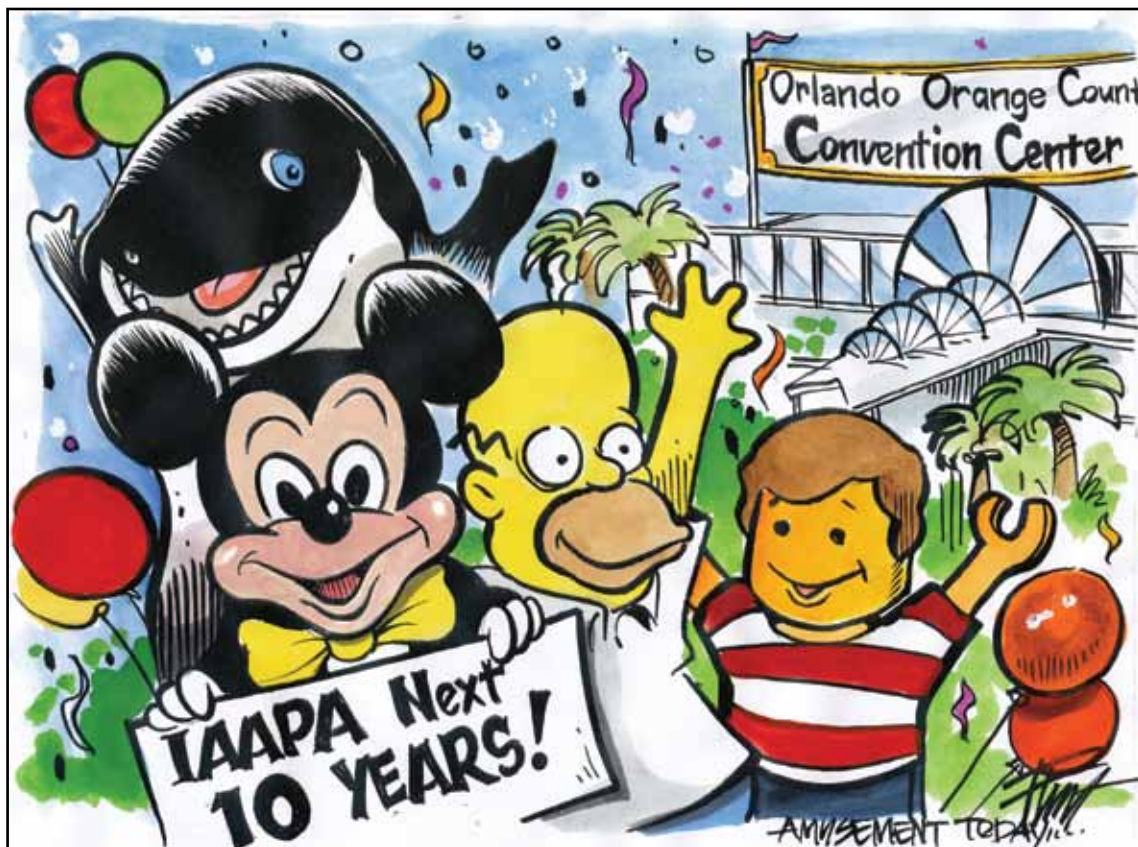
Industry members to gather at Busch Gardens Williamsburg for Golden Ticket Awards

Preparations for *Amusement Today's* coveted Golden Ticket Awards are well under way, and the host park for the two-day event, the beautiful Busch Gardens Williamsburg, is hard at work rolling out the red carpet for industry attendees who will visit on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 10-11. This is a "don't miss" industry gathering (not to mention always a great time with a lot of laughs!).

Special behind-the-scenes tours and a social reception is being planned to kick-off the event on September 10, while other activities such as guided park tours, a day of experiencing Busch Gardens Williamsburg in operation, and, of course, the anticipated awards show, will entertain attendees on September 11.

To check out the itinerary for the Golden Ticket Awards, as well as to register, please log on to www.goldenticketawards.com. This event is reserved for working professionals in the park and amusement industry. Representatives from parks and attractions, manufacturers, suppliers, consultants and more will come together to celebrate another industry season – all in the name of fun.

This is the 13th annual year for the Golden Ticket Awards; they are presented to the "Best of the Best" in the amusement industry and are calculated from an international poll conducted by the industry trade publication *Amusement Today*.



Andrew Mellor

The importance of being original

The opportunity to hear industry leaders speak at different events and provide their expert and knowledgeable insights into the many aspects of the theme park and visitor attraction industry is always one worthwhile taking.

Recently I attended the Vision XS attraction operator's conference in the U.K. which this year played host to a number of 'A' list speakers, including two industry legends in Bob Rogers, founder and chairman of BRC Imagination Arts, and John Holland, former general manager of Animal Kingdom and Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World, Florida.

Both, of course, provided inspirational and thought provoking presentations, discussing the importance of reaching into the hearts of the audience, being original and empowering staff through great leadership, among other things.

And it was the point about being original, discussed by Rogers, and the observations he made on the effects of globalization on the industry that was one of many I thought about later. He noted that very often it was a case of the same solution for everything and urged

delegates to differentiate their venues from one another rather than doing the same thing. Of course many operators do strive to be different and work hard to provide guests with original ideas, but there are also venues that often do pretty much the same thing as they've seen elsewhere with little or no effort to put their own stamp on it.

Creating your own identity is important in all walks of life and none more so than in a place where you want to attract visitors time and time again. Guests to theme parks and other types of visitor attractions go to a number of venues each year. If all they get are the same or similar experiences then they are going to start looking elsewhere for their entertainment and days out. With constantly increasing competition for the leisure dollar, euro, pound, etc., being original has never been so important.

Audiences are more sophisticated and simply won't put up with seeing the same things repeated in the facilities they visit. They are constantly demanding more and better products and being original will ensure parks cater to that demand.



Mellor

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2 MINUTE DRILL

Compiled by Janice Witherow

Denise Weston

Creative Kingdoms / MagiQuest

Denise Weston sure knows how to have fun! In fact, some say she revolutionized the art of play by discovering an inventive concept that combines computer play and physical activity for children with MagiQuest, the world's largest live action game. A trained psychologist, Denise has used her talents to consult for companies such as Hasbro and Disney; plus she has authored three books and written more than 75 articles on play, toys, family entertainment, family travel and parenting. In 1999, she helped found Creative Kingdom. As a mother of three, Denise has plenty of inspiration from her children. Her sense of humor is obvious ... and a big key to her success.



Weston

Title

Director of Imagination and President Creative Kingdoms/MagiQuest.

Number of years in the industry

21.

Best thing about the industry

Amusement Today! OK, enough sucking up. The opportunity to entertain families by letting your imagination go wild.

Favorite amusement ride

The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man ...and my ragoon red 64 1/2 Mustang Convertible.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...

Commissioned to write a book on 50 "must-do" relaxing, romantic and rowdy adventures to add to your life's "Bucket List." Extensive research needed!

Biggest challenge facing our industry

Fear of trying new concepts and attractions due to economic pressures.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...

Show us the money!

My first car was ...

A big Ford van with the back seats taken out replaced by beanbags. What is a seat belt?!

A recent life-changing moment for me was ...

Realizing I wasn't 7 years old anymore. But 8 isn't so bad.

Coolest ocean creature

My daughter Emily scuba diving with me.

If I was a secret agent, my code name would be ...

I can't tell you! It'll blow my cover.

The magical power I wish I had is ...

I don't have to wish. Have you seen my collection of magic wands?

It's September! My favorite fall activity is ...

Road trip with family and friends seeing autumn colors and then skipping through the leaves.

To me, the scariest movie monster of all-time is ...

Is Joan Rivers considered a monster?

The concert I would love a backstage pass to would be ...

Pink Floyd.

Pick one: country house or big-city condo

Country house on Golden Pond complete with Hepburn and Fonda.

Ten years ago, I was ...

Dreaming of families creating magic together.

I can't stand being around people who ...

Have contagious diseases.

My family's ultimate road trip game is ...

"In my Jewish grandmother's trunk there is a ..."

The magazine cover I would most like to appear on would be ...

Fortune, Travel and Leisure, Time and Sports Illustrated. Which means I must have done something outrageous.

My least favorite word is ...

IMPOSSIBLE.

I am afraid of ...

Not spending enough time with my parents who live in the Midwest. (OK, that got me to call them and plan our next adventure).

The all-time best ad slogan hands-down is ...

Sometimes you feel like a nut...sometimes you don't.

To suggest a candidate for the Two-Minute Drill feature, contact columnist Janice Witherow at jwitherow@amusementtoday.com or (419) 357-3520.

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►OIL

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that total impact will be."

Other businesses in Destin were also reporting losses. Hotels and condominium rentals were down by as much as 30 percent, according to some reports.

In Panama City Beach, about 60 miles east of Destin, Buddy Wilkes, owner of Shipwreck Island waterpark, said his business is down this summer, but he feels, at least for him, it may have more to do with the local school calendar than any oil tar balls or the threat thereof.

"There were maybe four or five tar balls reported on the beach so far this summer," Wilkes said, at the first of August.

Right after this interview, however, over the weekend of Aug. 6-8, there were reports of tar balls washing ashore in the Panama City Beach area. A news report from the local ABC affiliate there reported tar balls ranging in size from as small as a penny to as large as a softball were collected by cleanup crews that descended quickly on the beaches. In all, over the three days, there were about 35 pounds collected, according to the report.

Yet, school schedules are still Wilkes's nemesis. Schools in the Panama City Beach area got out for the summer break June 10 and were scheduled to return Aug. 11 this year.

"That is a 70-day window for us," Wilkes said. "That doesn't give us much time."

In the initial several weeks after the Deepwater Horizon explosion, Wilkes said the Panama City Beach area did begin to see cancellations.

"Some said they were seeing cancellations of up to four to one and then later 10 to one," he said. "But, when they realized it hadn't come back, some of the people started coming back. We began a very aggressive marketing cam-



PHOTO COURTESY OF GULFARIUM

Gulfarium, located along the Gulf of Mexico on Okaloosa Island near Fort Walton Beach, Fla., has seen a drop of attendance this summer of up to 50 percent due to the Gulf oil disaster. Officials say there have been very few small tar balls on the beach there, but the perception has scared tourists away.

paign and came up with some promotions."

One successful promotion for them this summer was tied to the Florida Lottery. People who purchased Florida lottery tickets and didn't win could bring their losing tickets to the waterpark and receive a \$5 off discount towards admission.

"We had a ton of these," he said. "When we look at what could have been we are really pleased at where we are right now in the season. In fact, if you can hold your own this year, that is really good."

Wilkes also said that the Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau received \$1 million of a \$20 million payment made by BP to the State of Florida to promote tourism. With that, the Panama City Beach CVB created several promotions.

Management at Gulf World Marine Park staff has done what it could to draw in its share of the local Panama City Beach visitors. But, many of its programs begin filling up early in the year, as they are reservation-only, such as the dolphin swim. People began canceling reservations not long after the oil started heading in that direction, even though it hadn't reached his shores.

"Even our more popular educational programs, like the Dolphin Camp and Vet Camp, are down as much as 35 percent," Hardy said.

Management at some other Gulf shore attractions couldn't be reached for comments. Officials at the Audubon Aquarium of the Ameri-

cas in New Orleans were not interested in giving comments for this story.

The New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau stated in several reports that tourism was still going strong. It seems people were still visiting New Orleans, but were skittish about eating seafood, according to the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, who found their business way down.

Repeated attempts to reach management at The Track Family Recreation Center and Waterville USA, both located in Gulf Shores, Ala., went unanswered.

Kim Chapman, public relations manager, Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, responded by sending tourism figures for the first portion of the 2010 season.

Taxable lodging rentals for May 2010, reached more than \$20 million, a 7.3 percent decrease from \$22 million collected in May 2009. Taxable retail sales topped \$51 million for May 2010, which is a 4.3 percent decrease from \$53 million for May 2009.

"While June taxes are being processed, hotel and condominium occupancy rates for the month allude to a 20 to 30 percent decrease," information released from the Gulf Shores, Orange Beach CVB stated. "Hotels were filled more than 60 percent while condominiums were about 44 percent full. These rates show a decrease of 22.7 percent and 38.4 percent, respectively, when compared to June 2009."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Passion for a park

Dear Editor:

The county of Westchester, New York has a crown jewel [Rye Playland] by the sound. It is a tarnished jewel as political football has been played with it for ages. And because it is subject to political football, it has never lived up to the promise it offers.

It was not always that way. When the citizens of Westchester County first commissioned Playland, it was left to an industry veteran to design and operate the park. Frank Darling came up with a design so good that even Walt Disney visited to get ideas for his little project, Disneyland. It has significance enough that it has been designated a national historic landmark.

At some point, the county took over. With parks, recreation and conservation personnel trying to run a park, the passion was gone. The Airplane Coaster was torn down because of negligence in the maintenance area.

I was lucky enough to work at the legendary park when Joe Montalto was the director. He had a passion for the park and did much to improve the park's infrastructure. Joe brought in new rides to attract guests. Joe brought in business people from outside the county to run the park professionally.

When Joe Montalto retired, another parks, recreation and conservation manager came to the park. He tried the political tactic of saying that Playland was not an amusement park. It was a county park that just happened to have amusement rides. And the management changed to treating Playland as just another park. The personnel who had a passion for the business were pushed out along with those from the outside of the parks system.

New management did not look at the history of Playland. It had Marriott Corporation run the park for a few seasons in an attempt to return to the roots of the company. But politicians could not stay out of the mix and did not approve of the spending to bring Playland back to its former glory. The one mistake that Marriott made was to start charging a gate fee. The current regime has repeated that mistake. At-

tendance is down because of sticker shock. No park has gone from a free gate to a paid gate without experiencing at least a temporary decline in attendance.

In a perfect world, the county would either hire park professionals to run the park or a company that runs traditional amusement parks. Would the owner of a grocery store hire someone to manage his store that had no experience in groceries? But they cannot hire just any professionals. They must hire those with a passion for the business. It would be nice to get someone from a park like Knoebels where the gate is still free. A professional from there would understand how to make a free gate amusement park work. I feel the tradition of a free gate must be restored in order to drive attendance. Someone who has a passion for running the park and understands the dynamics of a free park is essential to making Playland the success it can be.

There is profit in Playland. The concessionaires who run the food outlets, the games and the gift outlets are for profit. It is a shame that the county does not take some of those operations. Also, Playland's budget includes hundreds of thousands of dollars for the buses to run to it. Does any other business in Westchester County pay this amount for buses to stop at them? Other charges get put on Playland's budget. Get the politics out and hire professionals to run the park and a jewel will be saved.

Bay Beach Amusement Park in Green Bay Wisconsin is run by the municipality parks and recreation department. It is so successful that more land has been purchased and a wooden coaster is being moved from a defunct park. Just as many government bodies run waterparks, thus an amusement park can be run successfully by a government entity with the right leadership.

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BRIEF

Nickelodeon Land to open in 2011 at Blackpool Beach

Nickelodeon and Blackpool Pleasure Beach, one of Britain's top tourist attractions, recently announced a licensing partnership to develop the first Nickelodeon-branded attraction in the U.K. Nickelodeon's popular shows and characters will come to life with more than 14 attractions covering an area of 6-acres at Pleasure Beach. Construction on "Nickelodeon Land" will begin this fall and the grand opening is scheduled for the spring of 2011.

"Blackpool Pleasure Beach is a first-class amusement park and popular destination for families in the U.K.," said Gerald Raines, Senior Director, Nickelodeon Theme Parks and Attractions. "This is an ideal location for Nickelodeon and a great opportunity to expand our global presence. We look forward to offering the Pleasure Beach patrons experiences that are unique to Nickelodeon and based on fan favorites like SpongeBob SquarePants and Dora the Explorer."

Under the terms of the agreement, Nickelodeon will bring its characters, interactive shows, and signature green slime to Pleasure Beach. "Nickelodeon Land" also will feature new rides, attractions, retail shops, games and food service establishments.

Asian Attractions Expo pulls in record numbers

Andrew Mellor
Amusement Today

Held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in mid-July, this year's IAAPA Asian Attractions Expo turned out to be a record breaking event – and in more ways than one!

The four day conference and trade show, held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center, broke previous event records for the total number of participants and buyers in attendance, the size of the trade show floor and attendance figures for the conference program.

The organizers estimated that approximately 4,750 people participated in the event, including 3,250 buyers from 40 countries, representing a 34 percent increase in the total number of buying companies and an 11 percent increase in the total number of buyers when compared to the previous year's event.

"We are extremely pleased with the record-breaking results for Asian Attractions Expo 2010 in Kuala Lumpur," said IAAPA Chairman Chip Cleary. "Our co-hosts, MAATFA and AALARA, and our sponsors, Arihant, Jack Rouse Associates and Kraftwerk, provided significant support for this year's event and played a key role in that success. For that, we are grateful."

Dato' Richard Koh, President of Malaysian Association of Amusement Theme Park and Family Attractions (MAATFA) said: "This is the

first time the Asian Attractions Show has been held in Malaysia. But we couldn't have predicted this would be the greatest and largest show ever in Asia. As the co-host, we are very satisfied with the results. The show outcome was beyond expectations."

For the Australian Amusement Leisure and Recreation Association (AALARA), association President Robert Bradley said, "It was a tremendous opportunity for our group of over 120 to represent the Australian industry at this major event attended by the Asian attractions industry and leaders of industry from Europe and the United States. The feedback I received from the many Australian delegates who attended was a fabulous event providing an interesting and insightful education program, diverse trade exhibition, fun evening social functions at Aquaria and Sunway Lagoon in an exciting city undergoing a huge amount of growth in attractions and development. I am sure we all brought back great ideas for our businesses."

The trade show itself saw an impressive increase in the number of exhibiting companies taking part, with this being up almost 50 percent on the 2009 show. A total of 212 companies took part.

Asian Attractions Expo 2011 will be held at the convention center at Singapore's new destination resort, Resorts World Sentosa, from June 21-24.



A total of 212 exhibiting companies took part in the 2010 Asian show, showcasing a wide variety of equipment and services. Below, IAAPA President Charlie Bray chats to MAATFA President Dato Richard Koh over dinner during the IAAPA Asian Attractions Expo.

PHOTOS COURTESY IAAPA



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KMG's XXL swings into Belgium



PHOTOS COURTESY KMG

The new XXL portable swing ride from KMG Europe BV serves as a major highlight of the annual Sinksenfoor in Antwerp, Belgium. Owned by showman Jack Doremont, XXL holds 20 passengers per ride cycle, swings to a height of 148 feet and can be set up in six hours by four workman. The ride sports an LED light package and theming provided by EK Atelier of Germany.

U.K. seaside venues add 4D effects theatres from Simworx

Two U.K. venues have opened exciting new family attractions for the 2010 season from 4D effects theatre specialist Simworx.

The Grand Pier in Weston-Super-Mare, near Bristol, and Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach on the Suffolk coast, have both added new 4D effects theatres from the U.K. based specialist, adding more family fun and excitement and a totally new type of attraction to their offerings.

Devastated by a fire in July 2008, the Grand Pier is on schedule to re-open this summer/early fall following a £39 million rebuilding program, which includes state-of-the-art rides and attractions. Among these is a new, 51-seat, 4D effects theatre from Simworx, who have completed a full turnkey project, incorporating the theatre into the new Pavilion building.

Featuring grandstand seating, the theatre also utilises full HD 3D projection, a Christie high definition sound system, special effects lighting and numerous 4D effects, such as seat vibration, water spray, leg ticklers, wind blowers, low smoke and bubbles. Several films will be available which can be changed on a regular basis to take into account the



PHOTOS COURTESY SIMWORX

The Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach is showing two 4D films from U.K. supplier Simworx.

high number of repeat visitors who come to the pier. Those due to be shown include the

award winning World War II epic *The Mission*, the fast action paced *Ravine Racer* and the fun-filled, award winning pirate adventure *Curse of Skull Rock*.

"Having decided to install a 4D theatre, Simworx was the clear winner when it came to choosing a supplier," said pier owner Kerry Michael. "We are delighted with the results and I'm sure our visitors will enjoy the experience for many years to come."

At Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach, Simworx has installed a 30-seat 4D effects theatre which is the first such attraction in the area. Opened in June, the attraction is housed in an existing building which previously accommodated a simulator ride from another supplier and was totally revamped with the latest technology relating to the new theatre. This again includes a Christie high definition sound system, special effects lighting and various 4D effects, such as seat vibration, leg ticklers, wa-

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Maurer Söhne coasters highlight new Italian park

Andrew Mellor
Amusement Today

Germany coaster specialist Maurer Söhne is currently involved in a number of different projects around the world, including the installation of two coasters at the new Rainbow Magicland park being built in Valmontone near Rome, Italy.

The new park is being developed at a cost of €300 million (approximately U.S. \$396 million) and among the many rides and attractions on offer will be an X-Car Launch Coaster and a Spinning Coaster (SC) from Maurer Söhne.

The SC3000 will be an indoor coaster covering a base area of 40 meters by 60 meters (179 feet by 131 feet) and will feature a short section of track that takes riders outside the building, a "panorama curve" at one corner of the building, according to the company.

The ride will feature two lifts, the first located shortly after the station and the second just before riders return to the station. In between will be a narrow and twisting track



PHOTOS COURTESY MAURER SÖHNE

Above left: The Maurer Söhne Spinning Coaster takes shape at the new Rainbow Magicland park in Italy. Above right: The track on the Maurer Söhne Spinning Coaster takes riders outside the building in a short "panorama curve" section, as can be seen in the top right of this image.

layout stretching a total of 430 meters (1,411 feet). The maximum height of the ride will be 17 meters (56 feet) and hourly capacity will be 850 riders utilizing seven cars. Maximum speed will be 58 kph (36 mph) and a ride time of 75 seconds.

The launch coaster (according to unofficial sources) will be 750 meters in length

and reach a height of 35 meters. It is set to take passengers from 0 to 100 kph in 2.5 seconds and will have a ride duration of 80 seconds. Five trains will be used providing a capacity of approximately 1,000 riders.

Other projects in which Maurer Söhne is currently involved include a Spinning

Coaster for Bobbejaanland in Belgium which is due to open in the spring of 2011. This will feature a 420 meter (1,378 foot) long track, stand 16 meters (52.5 feet) high, and will have a capacity of 800 riders per hour using six cars. Additionally, and also planned for opening in spring next year, is a new launch coaster for the Bayern-

park in Germany, which will go under the name of "Freischütz" and incorporate a new concept of brake and LSM in one element. Track length will be 480 meters (1,574 feet), height 35 meters (115 feet) and top speed 80 kph (50 mph). One X-Car train with 12 seats will be used.

Amusement Technical completes variety of projects for 2010 season

With the 2010 season now in full swing, U.K. amusement ride manufacturer Amusement Technical has announced the completion of a range of projects for a variety of attraction venues, while also introducing several new "off the shelf" safety related products.

At Camelot theme park in north west England, Amusement Technical has completed the full refurbishment of the park's 33-seat Pirate Ship ride, while also carrying out continued maintenance on the Nightmare roller coaster. At Knowsley Safari Park, also in the north west area, the company has refurbished the venue's mini-Pirate Ship and Severn-Lamb built train.

On the south coast, at Funland Hayling Island, Amusement Technical has completed the full refurbishment of the park's Breakdance ride, including a full upgrade of the drive and control system, while it has also carried out work on the Ghost Train on the South Pier in Blackpool, where a new control system

and a newly developed vehicle anti-collision system have been added.

The anti-collision system is, in fact, part of a retrofit safety product range the company is developing in response to feedback from both operators and ride inspectors for the need for such devices to reduce even further the possibility of incidents occurring on different amusement ride devices.

"In discussions we've had with ride operators and inspectors it's become clear that the creation of a range of safety products which can be retrofitted to rides to help further alleviate a number of potential hazards, would be a real benefit for individuals and for the industry as a whole," commented Amusement Technical owner and director Sean Brian. "The anti-collision system, for example, is an 'off the shelf' product for any multi-car transport system powered from a rail. There is nothing similar on the market at present and I believe it will be a re-



PHOTO COURTESY AMUSEMENT TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

New at Atlantis Adventure Park this season is this Honey Pot Bears children's round ride and a dolphin themed mini-Pirate Ship ride (not shown) from Amusement Technical Solutions.

ally useful product to offer.

"There are a number of issues that need solutions 'off the shelf' to improve different aspects of different rides and we are targeting these with these latest ideas," he added.

There will be five products in the range initially, while in addition to these a custom-made safety product now

also being provided is an automated railway crossing for park train rides. This will activate when a train approaches a section of track at which guests cross and will feature bells, flashing lights and other warnings to alert those in the vicinity that a train is coming. The first of these has already been installed at Twycross Zoo

in the U.K.

Amusement Technical's product range also includes a number of rides and sales of these continue to be buoyant. Among new installations for the 2010 season are two rides at Atlantis Adventure Park, Atlantic Village, in Devon, U.K., where a Honey Pot Bears children's round ride and a dolphin themed mini-Pirate Ship are to open shortly.

Additionally, the company's range features several other children's and family rides, such as the Rodeo Trail and Jungle Safari, with more recent additions being a mid-size panoramic tower, a Big Wheel, a monorail system, a dark ride transportation system and a Wave Swinger. All are manufactured at the company's premises in Preston, Lancashire, while Amusement Technical also provides a variety of specialist engineering and refurbishment services to the global ride industry.

• www.amusementtechnical.co.uk

►SIMWORX

Continued from page 6

ter spray, wind and bubbles.

The films to be shown in the Great Yarmouth theatre are *Curse of Skull Rock* and a new film currently in production called *Dracula 4D*, a "spooky" action comedy suitable for all the family. The two films will be alternated throughout the season.

"This has been something we've been looking at for a couple of years," commented Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach Managing Director Albert Jones, "in particular because of the weather in the early and late part of the season; we are trying to add more indoor attractions. It caters for all ages from toddlers to senior citizens, as well as being accessible by the disabled. 3D is 'in' at the moment, too, so it's good to do something topical and that the public is talking about."

"We went to the IAAPA show in the U.S. last year and looked at several different suppliers but decided to go with Simworx," he continued. "The new theatre replaces a motion simulator we had previously and we've done all the building works and design on the outside to Simworx's specifications. We are having two films, *Curse of Skull Rock* and *Dracula 4D*, and will probably run each one every couple of hours. We wanted two films so we can cater for repeat visitors, which we get a lot of, and give them something different to watch."

Commenting on the two projects, Simworx Managing Director Terry Monkton said: "I'm delighted to have secured these two quite different projects at two of the U.K.'s most popular seaside resorts. It's been a pleasure to be involved in the re-building plans at the Grand Pier in Weston-super-Mare and I'm sure our theatre there will become a very popular part of the overall experience provided. At Great Yarmouth, again we're very proud to bring to a traditional seaside amusement park an attraction which features some of the latest, state-of-the-art technology which I feel will add another dimension to the vast array of rides and attractions on offer. I'm confident both projects will be very successful."

•www.simworx.co.uk.

Melbourne's Luna Park introducing Shrek show

To mark the upcoming spring school holidays, Melbourne, Australia's Luna Park will present a live stage show — *Stompin' the Swamp* — featuring characters from DreamWorks Animation's popular Shrek film series.

Stompin' the Swamp tells the tale of Shrek and Princess Fiona's wedding anniversary. Fiona dreams of a romantic



evening of dancing and music with her one true love

... but Shrek has forgotten all about their special day. Princess Fiona makes a heartfelt wish, which is overheard by a Frankie the Funky Fairytale Fairy, who sets out to help.

Stompin' the Swamp will run daily from Sept. 18 until Oct. 3, 2010.

More details on historic Luna Park can be found at: www.lunapark.com.au.

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Valleyfair to add Planet Snoopy

It's a new look with an old friend as Snoopy and the Gang are finally coming home to Minnesota. Valleyfair proudly announces it will open Planet Snoopy for its 2011 season.

"It is a very exciting time for Valleyfair as Snoopy and his friends make our park their new home," said Larry MacKenzie, vice president and general manager of Valleyfair.

Planet Snoopy will be located in what is currently known as KidWorks. Construction on Planet Snoopy will begin this fall and is anticipated to be completed in plenty of time for the opening of the park next season. Current plans for the project include an estimated five re-themed rides and the addition of 14 new rides and attractions. Planet Snoopy will provide fun for the whole family as well as give Valleyfair a fresh and exciting new look.

The arrival of Peanuts characters in the park is fitting because it was Minnesota native, Charles Schultz, who introduced the Peanuts characters to the country in 1950. Snoopy, Charlie Brown and the others became one of the most celebrated and popular cartoon strips in history, spawning television specials, movies, toys, dolls and countless other forms of merchandise.

Shoot the Rapids finally makes a splash at Cedar Point



Tim Baldwin
Amusement Today

It took a little while in coming. Hoping to have its new ride ready for opening day, Cedar Point was dismayed when the new-for-2010 Shoot the Rapids didn't open until late June. Getting the ride ready to launch had its share of snags and hiccups, but riders are now enjoying Cedar Point's latest water ride.

Cedar Point brought back the name Shoot the Rapids from a short-lived, but often remembered, flume ride from 1967. What was small in stature back then now boasts some bigger statistics. In addition to the removal of the original Shoot the Rapids, Cedar Point had also removed its other flumes — The Mill Race to make way for Raptor, and White Water Landing to make space for Maverick. The time to return a flume ride to the park seemed clear.

Today, the park's three water rides are clustered near each other. Thunder Canyon, the Intamin rapids ride, is across the walkway from Shoot the Rapids, and just beyond is the Arrow Snake River Falls. *Amusement Today* asked what advantages there are to positioning all three of the

park's water rides near each other. John Hildebrandt, vice president and general manager for Cedar Point, explains, "The advantage is guests who get charged with getting wet have another such attraction close by." Hildebrandt also says it helps security as other parts of the park require shirt and shoes and having the water rides near each other contains those with water-minded dress into one location.

Shoot the Rapids, supplied by IntaRide, features not only one, but two major drops to thrill guests. The largest comes first. At 85 feet, boats reach speeds close to 50 mph at the bottom of the splash landing. The second drop, located at the spectator viewing area is 49 feet and crosses just below the larger drop. In so doing, the plunge dives below an overhead support of the larger drop giving an unnerving visual. "It's a Gemini moment," laughs Hildebrandt, referring to the park's large racing coaster where one particular hill dives just below an overhead support creating a scary surprise. In all, the flume travels 2,100 feet and utilizes 730,000 gallons of water.

"We put in full filtration on both reservoirs," says Monty Jasper, corporate vice president of safety and engineering. Referring to the treated water, Jasper adds, "It's swimming pool quality." To create the two reservoirs needed for the attraction, the park had to bring in fill to raise the area. "We didn't want the natural water of Lake Erie to interfere," states Jasper.

The park considers the
► See FLUME, page 14

Cedar Point's new Shoot the Rapids gives some relief from the summer time heat. The ride's tallest lift (top) comes first, while the final drop splashes into a rocky canyon of cascading water (bottom).

PHOTOS COURTESY
CEDAR POINT

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Zamperla's new Air Race takes off at Luna Park

Italian ride manufacturer Zamperla chose Coney Island's new Luna Park as the roll-out customer for its latest innovation – the Air Race.

Intended to replicate the motion and forces experienced by acrobatic airplane pilots, the Air Race puts riders through the paces by generating a wide range of maneuvers including banks, dives, loops and weightlessness.

Offered in both a deluxe and standard version, Air Race features a central mast from which radiate six stationary arms. From each arm hangs a secondary rotating arm and a single open-cockpit, four-seat airplane. As the entire structure revolves, motors on each of the six arms cause the airplanes to rotate 360 degrees. A number of different programs offer the 24 passengers a variety of ride experiences. Over-the-shoulder restraints are used to secure riders.

Amusement Today spoke about the appeal of the new ride with Valerio Ferrari, general manager of Zamperla USA. "The Air Race is by far the most popular ride at Luna Park," he said. "It's extremely fast and it pulls up to 4 G's, about the same as a fighter pilot."

On a somber but nonetheless important note, Ferrari wanted to mention that Air Race was conceived and designed by Zamperla Engineer Giambattista Zambelli. This amazing visionary, who is also credited with numerous other successful Zamperla rides such as the Power Surge and Rockin' Tug, passed away suddenly in late May 2010, just days before he was scheduled to board a flight from Italy to the United States to see his latest ride in action at Luna Park.

"I met Giambattista Zambelli in 1993, and he joined Zamperla shortly after that," Ferrari added. "It was very sad to lose Giambattista. Not only was he an excellent engineer, he was a very good friend."

—Scott Rutherford



Zambelli



Zamperla debuted its new Air Race this summer at N.Y.'s Luna Park.

AT PHOTOS/GARY SLADE



Intamin first-generation Freefall finds new life at Dorney Park

Pennsylvania's Dorney Park spent the 2009 season focusing on family fun with the addition of the Good Time Theater and Snoopy Rocks on Ice show. This year, Dorney Park ramps up the thrill factor with the addition of Demon Drop, a first generation Free Fall from Intamin. The ride simulates a plunge from a 10-story building, and will be the park's first true free-fall ride experience.

After operating for 27 successful summers at Cedar Fair's flagship park, Cedar Point, the 131-foot-tall Demon Drop was closed at the end of the 2009 season. Following a careful dismantling, it was refurbished, repainted and rebuilt in Dorney Park's lower midway near the Thunder Creek Speedway.

A Demon Drop ride begins with passengers boarding at ground level into a four-person car that moves horizontally to the base of the tower. The car then climbs to the crest of the tower in six seconds. Once at the top, the car slowly inches forward into the drop area. Without warning, the vehicle is released, plummeting toward the ground and generating two

seconds of true free-fall before experiencing the deceleration as the car enters a pull-out curve. A computerized braking system stops the car and then returns it under the main track and back to loading platform.

Vice President and General Manager of Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom Jason McClure said: "Demon Drop is a great addition to the Dorney Park skyline. The collection of three amazing drop-tower experiences [Dominator, an S&S twin tower complex featuring a Space Shot and Turbo Drop] now makes Dorney a haven for free-fall thrillseekers."

While once theme park staples, Intamin's first-generation Freefalls are becoming rarer with each passing season. Along with Dorney's Demon Drop, the only remaining installations still in operation are: Torre do Terror, Beto Carrero World, Brazil; Hollywood Tower, Movie Studios Park, Italy; and three units in Japan (Toshimean, Central Park and Nagashima Spa Land).

—Scott Rutherford

S&S Screamin' Swing going to Dollywood

New \$5.5 million Barnstormer to swing 32 riders up to height of 81 feet

Dollywood officials have announced that the park's 2011 improvements will be highlighted by the introduction of Barnstormer, a \$5.5 million Screamin' Swing supplied by S&S Worldwide, based in Lo-

gan, Utah.

"I remember my daddy and granddaddy talking about the old barnstormers that used to do all kinds of crazy stunts above the fields where they'd work crops," said Dolly Parton. "My new Barnstormer ride offers folks those same breathtaking moments, high in the sky above Dollywood. And I've recreated a critter-themed barnyard that reminds me of growing up on the farm here

in the Smoky Mountains!"

Taking its name from the daring aerialists and stunt pilots of the 1920s, the Barnstormer features two pendulum arms with seating for 32 riders. Seated back to back, riders travel progressively higher on each swing of the Barnstormer's arms, reaching a maximum speed of 45 miles per hour and 230 degrees of rotation. At its peak, the Barnstormer reaches a staggering 81 feet in the air, taking riders high above the barn's rooftop and the area's treetops. Situated in the lush foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, the Barnstormer rests amid a traditional red barn on the Owens Farm, a nod to Parton's family's rural upbringing.

While the Barnstormer fills the air above the barn, children's play areas dot the landscape around the barn. With a fun, barnyard theme, children can enjoy a 22-foot by 16-foot bi-plane play area as well as a pig pen waterplay area.

The Barnstormer has a ride capacity of 450 passengers per hour, and a 48-inch minimum height requirement. The Barnstormer will be built adjacent to the Mountain Slidewinder, one of the park's most popular rides which opened in 1987.

The new area opens in March 2011 to usher in Dollywood's 26th operating season.



RENDERING COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

For the 2011 season, Dollywood will launch Barnstormer, a 32-seat Screamin' Swing supplied by S&S Worldwide. The ride will be built adjacent to the Mountain Slidewinder and take its first flight next March.

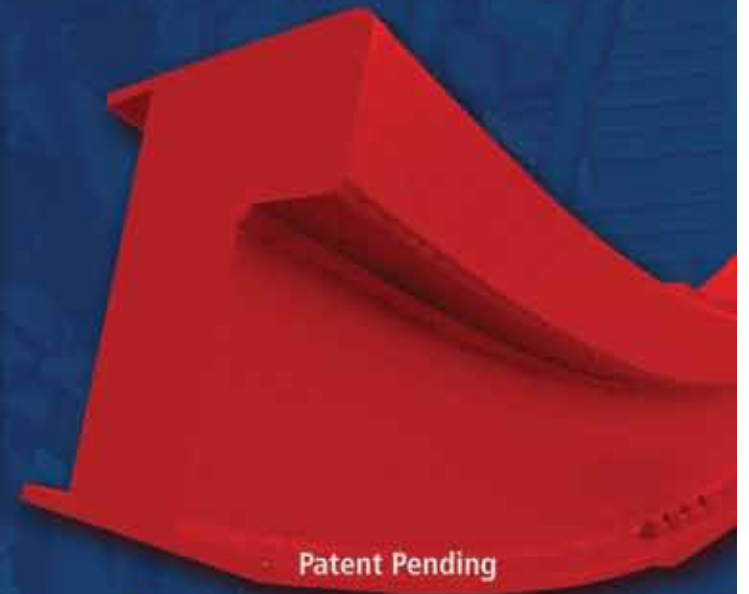
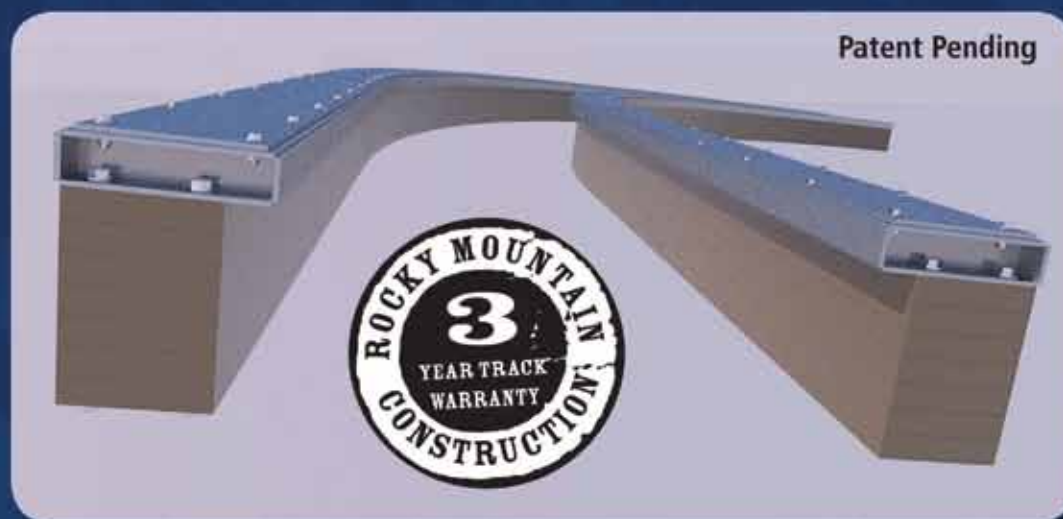
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Part of Shoot the Rapids' charm comes from theming incorporated into the ride. Cedar Point created the western theming in-house, crediting the Planning & Design department for enhancing the ride experience. The thematic touch fits in nicely within the park's Frontier Trail.

AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

►FLUME

Continued from page 11

ride to have two "sides," one being on the island which it shares with the Millennium Force giga-coaster, and the "mainland" side. Hildebrandt likes the ride's location. "It has great interplay with other rides around it. You cross the Cedar Point Railroad and on the other side is Paddle Wheel Excursions. The background is Millennium Force, Top Thrill Dragster and Power Tower." Hildebrandt beams, "It's a

beautiful site."

Theming for the ride was done in house. Located on the Frontier Trail of Cedar Point, a western feel permeates the ride experience. Riders journey through a mist-filled tunnel (complete with appropriate music), between canyon walls, along spraying geysers and by an abandoned ghost town. "Rob Decker of Cedar Point's Planning & Design put together the theming," credits Jasper. "His team is wonderful."

Guests choosing not to ride can still be part of the experience with eight geysers alongside the ride's grand finale. For just 25 cents, friends and family (and malicious strangers) can send bursts of water at the passing riders continuing the wet fun. Passengers are duly warned to be prepared to get soaked. "The second drop has water effects and the guest interaction," says Jasper. "Both drops are spectacular."

With an original budget of \$10.5 million, Shoot the Rapids continues to maintain Cedar Point's reputation of big, high-capacity rides. With 10 boats that seat 10 riders each, the ride has a potential capacity of 900 riders per hour. Shoot the Rapids also utilizes a single rider line which allows the park to further their throughput each hour.

With Shoot the Rapids now welcoming guests, Cedar Point now has 75 rides, including 17 coasters, more rides and more coasters than any park in the world. The park also has introduced five new shows to its entertainment package, including a real-life version of MTV's Rock Band video game.

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Animalive installs first U.S. Party Room system at iT`Z

Animalive, a developer of live interactive animation for the amusement and leisure industries, recently announced the first installation of its Party Room technology in Houston, Texas. The unique interactive system has been installed at Houston's iT`Z family entertainment center, creating a one of a kind experience for party guests.

Animalive's party room system allows birthday party guests to participate in a live animated interactive show with the company's popular beagle mascot "Buddy." Party goers will be provided with an interactive experience with games, live conversation and the highlight, the

character leading the party in singing Happy Birthday. All of the interaction is then recorded and available to the party on a take home DVD. The technology combines motion capture, real time animation rendering software and video recording to deliver a new performance every time.

"This creates such a magical experience for the birthday party attendees and a personalized keepsake for the birthday child," says Michael Goss, Animalive U.S. director of sales. "Animalive has installations throughout the rest of the world and is excited about entering the U.S. market, especially with such a highly honored facil-

ity," adds Goss.

iT`Z and Animalive were both recently awarded top honors by IAAPA in their respective business categories. iT`Z was voted top FEC of the world by IAAPA for 2009. Animalive was awarded for the best product show production and entertainment.

"We are thrilled to be able to expand our birthday party experience to our guests and offer the Houston, Texas market the first U.S. installation of this brand of interactive entertainment," said Mark Moore, iT`Z CEO. "Animating your mascot and allowing live interaction is truly special, the families love it," added Moore.

Animalive Technology



IMAGE COURTESY AMINALIVE TECHNOLOGIES

iT`Z, a hugely successful FEC in Houston, Texas, was the first U.S. facility to introduce the interactive Party Room technology from U.K. based Animalive Technologies. The technology lets guests take home a DVD of their interactive show experience, in this case with iT`Z's popular beagle mascot, Buddy.

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It's the last hoorah for Allan Herschell Mad Mouse at Quassy

Coaster closing to benefit Give Kids The World

Ron Gustafson

Special to Amusement Today

This "Mad Mouse" will be making its last dash come late September.

In an official "farewell" to the classic Allan Herschell roller coaster, Quassy Amusement Park in Middlebury, Conn., will offer free rides — on the coaster only — from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 25 and Sunday, Sept. 26. Parking is \$5 at the lakeside facility.

"The ride has been a cornerstone for the park for more than a quarter of a century, and it has served us well," noted George Frantzis II, a Quassy owner.

The all steel ride will be replaced by a new wooden coaster for 2011.

In addition, the "Mad Mouse" sign on the entrance to the ride will be auctioned off to the highest bidder at 1 p.m., Sept. 25 (rain date of Sept. 26). Proceeds from the auction will benefit Give Kids The World in

Kissimmee, Fla. The sign may be claimed Oct. 1.

Give Kids The World Village (GKTW) is a 70-acre, non-profit "storybook" resort in Central Florida. Children with life-threatening illnesses and their families are treated to weeklong, cost-free vacations, complete with accommodations, donated attraction tickets, meals, and more.

Since 1986, GKTW has welcomed more than 100,000 families. For more information, visit www.givekidsthe-world.org.

New coaster coming

Quassy will also be highlighting its new wooden roller coaster during the September weekend. The yet unnamed ride will be a family coaster with 1,200 feet of track and a height of 35 feet. It was designed by Ohio-based The Gravity Group. A video virtual ride and other information about the new roller coaster — as well as the retiring "Mad Mouse" — will be displayed all weekend in the Quassy restaurant.

Area schools are compet-



AT PHOTOS/GARY SLADE

The Allan Herschell "Mad Mouse" (aka "Monster Mouse") at Quassy Amusement Park in Middlebury, Conn., will be retired on Sept. 26. The park will provide free rides on the coaster Sept. 25 and 26 in an official farewell to the ride. The ride was built in 1966 in North Tonawanda, N.Y. and has been at Quassy since 1983.

ing in a "name the coaster" contest. The classroom that comes up with the name selected for the new ride will be

invited to Quassy next spring for an official unveiling of the coaster sign and rides on the new thrill machine.

About the Mouse

Quassy Amusement Park has operated the "Mad Mouse" since 1983. **► See MOUSE, page 17**

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►MOUSE

Continued from page 16

Mouse," also known as the "Monster," as its signature coaster since 1983. It was a fixture at Playland in Rye, N.Y. before coming to Connecticut.

"I was 14-years-old when my father purchased the ride," recalled Lou Tolve, who is an independent concessionaire at the county-owned amusement park in New York. The ride was delivered in the spring of 1967 after his late father, Joe, purchased it new from the Allan Herschell Co. of North Tonawanda, N.Y. The ride's serial number carries a 66, meaning manufacturing started/occurred in 1966 and Herschell records list Joseph Tolve as the buyer.

"I remember when it arrived at the park it was loaded onto several tractor-trailers," Tolve asserted. "Three welders were on it all day during the construction process, but we had it up and running that summer."

"It was a great ride for us and very safe," he added. The Tolves ran the maximum of eight cars on the ride at one time. It was also a marquee piece at Playland during its years there as it took the place of a wood frame "Wild Mouse" that had been at the landmark property.

Today, Quassy, only an hour from Playland, operates three cars on the ride with two in reserve.

"It's a great classic ride in every respect," said Eric Anderson, a Quassy owner, of the Herschell coaster. "For youngsters who ride their first big roller coaster with a parent, it's the ideal fit. The ride is who and what we are as a family facility and that is why this coaster has been an integral part of our operation."

"It still receives rave reviews after all these years," Anderson remarked. "It's a unique ride in a class all its own. It will be missed, but we have a new coaster coming!"

Commemorative "Mad Mouse Last Dash" T-shirts and postcards will be available Sept. 25 & 26 while supplies last.

The park's "Little Dipper" roller coaster, one of the oldest steel coasters in the nation, has operated in the park's kid-land since 1952. It was also built by the Allan Herschell Co.

New attraction highlights recovery from '08 backlot fire

Universal Studios Hollywood unleashes 'King Kong 360 3-D'

Dean Lamanna
Amusement Today

As might be expected of a rampaging 25-tall ape, King Kong returned to the Universal Studios Hollywood backlot in a very big way on June 29 with the premiere of "King Kong 360 3-D." The accompanying media drum beat and some virtual 3-D chest-thumping from the attraction's creator, Oscar-winning filmmaker Peter Jackson, ensured a larger-than-life welcome for the classic cinema character and numerous VIPs on hand at the Universal City, Calif., park.

"King Kong 360 3-D," the newest addition to the famed Universal Studios Hollywood Studio Tour, is billed as the world's largest and most intense 3D presentation. Replacing the audio-animatronics-based "King Kong Encounter," the popular 1986-built soundstage tram stop that was destroyed in a devastating backlot fire two summers ago, it combines ground-breaking Surround Digital 3D filmmaking and thrilling visceral effects to create a next-generation theme park experience.

Passengers aboard the familiar Studio Tour trams get their first hint of what's in store when they are given special 3D glasses at the entrance of a massive soundstage larger than a football field. Once inside, the trams are enveloped within enormous screens — covering an area equal to 16 conventional movie screens — and come to rest atop steel plates that deliver powerful motion.

Through Surround Digital 3D projection, guests are transported deep into a tangled, primal jungle, where they survive a close encounter with a swarm of hungry raptors before being confronted by terrifying 35-foot-tall dinosaurs. Suddenly, King Kong emerges, and the trams begin to rock and shudder — caught in the middle of a titanic struggle between the great ape and carnivorous prehistoric reptiles.

The attraction's sprawling scale and cutting-edge technology elevate the powerful, iconic storyline to a new level. The 3D environment and synchronized tram motion



Universal Studios Hollywood's Tram Tour, top, now features 'King Kong 360 3-D', above, where guests watch King Kong do battle with 35-foot tall dinosaurs, left.

PHOTOS COURTESY
UNIVERSAL HOLLYWOOD

combine to produce a sense of immersion and vivid realism, with rich sound effects and more-subtle atmospheric enhancements completing the illusion.

It would be an understatement to say that Peter Jackson, director of the 2005 Universal Pictures feature remake upon which "King Kong 360 3-D" is based, is enthused about his very expensive live-action brainchild.

"As a filmmaker, you're hoping to have the audience step inside your movie and become part of the experience... to create the illusion of reality in a way that is much more tactile and profound than can be done in the normal cinema

environment," Jackson said. "This attraction provided us with a unique opportunity to really push film and theme park technology to create that illusion."

Larry Kurzweil, president of Universal Studios Hollywood, added: "After a two-year absence, King Kong has returned with a vengeance never before seen. 'King Kong 360-3D' is the fight of the century and a highly repeatable breakthrough thrill ride...."

The arrival of the "King Kong 360 3-D" coincides with major enhancements to the Studio Tour. The trams have been upgraded with high-definition TV monitors in each car, and new video content and

Universal Hollywood's backlot to the future

The most extensive backlot construction ever at Universal Studios Hollywood, undertaken after many historic sets and buildings were destroyed by a three-alarm fire in June 2008, was completed in late June.

The four-acre project includes re-creations of legendary soundstages and sets, plus the introduction of brand-new exterior shooting locations. Studio tram tours have resumed through the rebuilt and/or enhanced Courthouse Square, Brownstone Street and New York Street, as well as through a new cityscape setting erected since the blaze.

To rebuild and upgrade the backlot for today's higher-tech film and TV production, the entertainment community assembled a world-renowned creative team. Jim Watters, president and general manager of NBC Universal Operations Group, and Dave Beanes, senior vice president of NBC Universal Production Services, were joined by, among others, Steven Spielberg and Academy Award-winning Avatar production designer Rick Carter to partake in the design process. The team quickly expanded to a list of 25 award-winning production designers and graphic artists who collaborated to restore this legendary Hollywood "dream factory."

high-grade digital playback and audio systems — as well as new video content incorporating commentary from top filmmakers like Steven Spielberg, Ron Howard and Stephen Sommers — offer guests a deeper behind-the-scenes look at the film and television industry. For more info, visit: www.universalstudioshollywood.com.



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BRIEF

Splash Country at Dollywood reports numbers are up, thanks to hot, dry summer

It seems the unusually hot summer weather has been beneficial to attendance numbers at most waterparks. This is especially true in the southern states.

In an effort to beat the heat, crowds have been flocking in droves to Dollywood's Splash Country, which is situated adjacent to Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Pete Owens of Dollywood and Splash Country sums it up: "Splash Country has done really well. We're up about 15 percent over where we were last year," he said. "We've exceeded our season pass sales quota. All of those things indicate that it's going to be a pretty good year."

Splash Country's shady, densely forested location makes it a perfect place to find respite from the soaring southern temperatures and oppressive humidity. The lack of rainy days this season also played a major role in the attendance jump.

"In 2009, there were about 40 percent of the days impacted by rain," added Owens. "It's less than five percent this year that we've had days that were significantly impacted by rain."

Who will be in the Golden Ticket Class of 2010?

Winners to be announced in the next issue of AT!

Waterparks in N.J., Mass. and Georgia all see additions

Six Flags adds to the waterpark fun at three properties

Thanks to exceptionally hot weather, the 2010 summer season has been a busy one at North America's waterparks. Three Six Flags properties — Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Jackson, N.J., Six Flags New England in Agawam, Mass. and Six Flags White Water in Atlanta, Ga. — all introduced major expansions, which enticed visitors even more to drop in for a chance to beat the heat.

The trio of improvements include:

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor, Jackson, N.J.

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor kicked off its 10th Anniversary season on May 29 with a new 60-foot Tornado slide.

Supplied by Canada's ProSlide Technology, the Tornado blasts thrillseekers down a 132-foot long vortex tunnel and into a 60-foot wide funnel. During the journey, guests fly into the eye of the storm, swishing from side-to-side by more than 5,000 gallons of water before being released into a calm catch pool. Guests can enjoy Tornado together in specially-designed, cloverleaf-shaped tubes that seat four. Those not brave enough to take on this new thrilling adventure can ride out the storm from the observation platform which features a view of all the action.

The Tornado touched down between the waterpark's tube slides 'Bada Bing, Bada Bang, Bada Boom!' and the speed slide complex Jurahnimo, Cannonball & Wahini Falls.'

Six Flags New England's Hurricane Harbor, Agawam, Mass.

Mr. Six beckons families to splash and play in New England's largest water park with the addition of Mr. Six's Splash Island, 16,000-square-feet of drenching thrills and relaxation.

Mr. Six's Splash Island boasts a 30,000-gallon shaded wavepool designed specifically for the little ones; and, a 150-foot interactive lazy river with dumping coconuts, rain curtains and squirting effects to keep kids cool in the hot New England sun. The fun continues with water bubblers and fountains throughout the area. Parents can relax in style with ten new luxury cabanas set poolside that offer lounge chairs, personal lockers, refrigerators, a flat screen TV and personal wait staff.

Along with Six Flags own designer providing conceptual design and project management, major suppliers for the Hurricane Harbor expansion include: Gylmn Geotechnical Engineering (project

► See SIX FLAGS, page 22



PHOTOS COURTESY SIX FLAGS

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Jackson, N.J. celebrated its 10th Anniversary with the addition of a new Tornado slide provided by Canada's ProSlide Technology. For spectators, the park constructed an observation platform where bystanders can view the action.



Mr. Six's Splash Island provides 16,000 square feet of thrills and relaxation at Six Flags New England's Hurricane Harbor. The new area includes a 30,000-gallon shaded wavepool designed specifically for younger guests along with a 150-foot-long interactive lazy river.

PHOTOS COURTESY
MARK ROSENZWEIG



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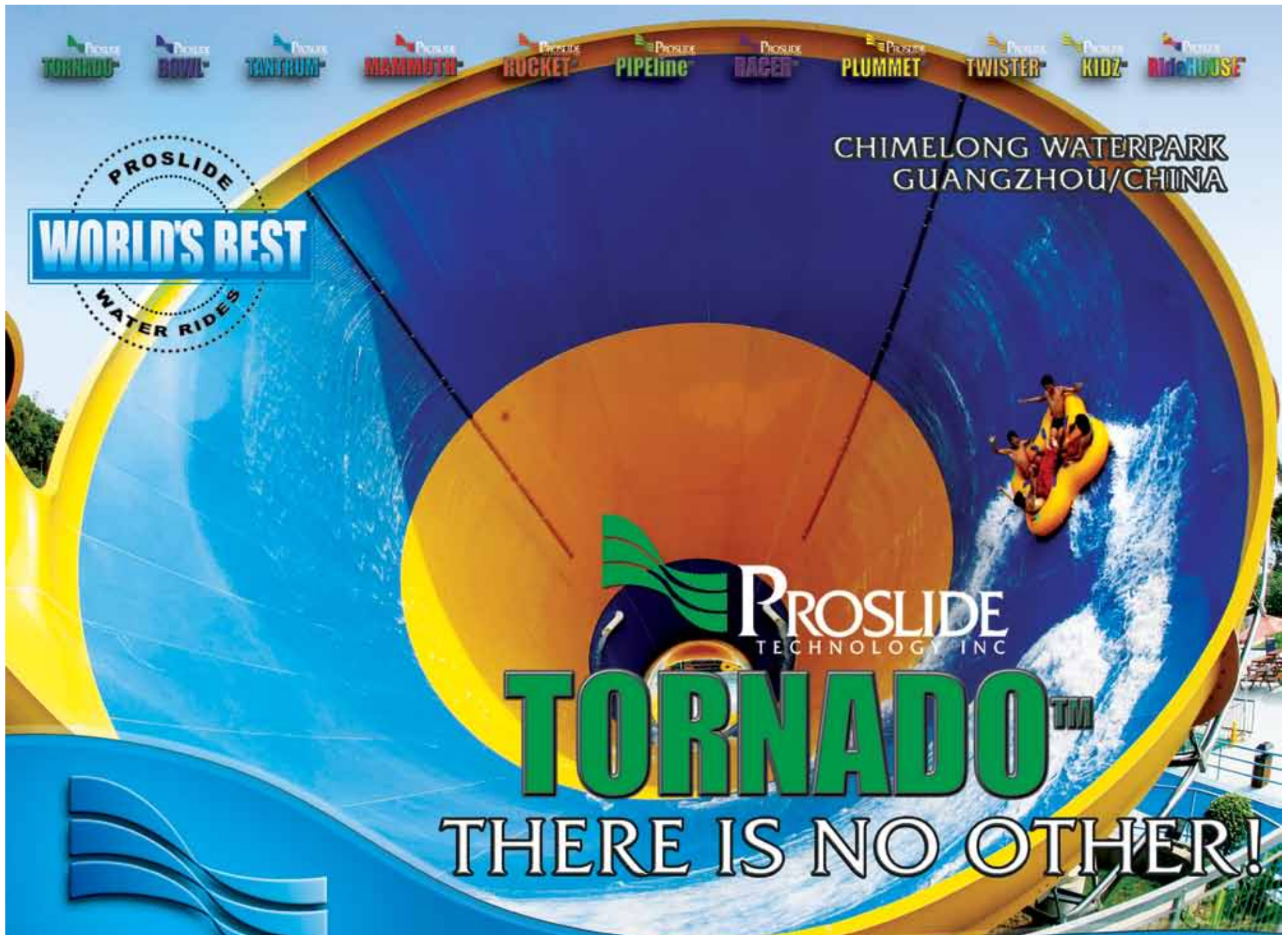
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►SIX FLAGS

Continued from page 19

engineers); Murphy's Waves LTD (primary layout design and wave equipment); Family Fun Pools (water movement and fiberglass river channel walls); and Funtraptions, Inc. (interactive pool and river features).

Also new for the 2010 season is a Johnny Rockets restaurant located next to Mr. Six's Splash Island.

Six Flags White Water, Atlanta, Ga.

Guests are finding themselves wiggling with excitement as Six Flags White Water introduced its newest attraction in May 2010. The largest waterpark in the Southeast transformed into the wiggliest and wettest family destination with the introduction of North America's first Wiggles Water World.

Wiggles Water World boast five interactive sections spread over a 40,000-square-foot area. The centerpiece is S.S. Feathersword, a 25-foot-tall interactive play ship. Guests are invited to become Captain Feathersword's first mate while exploring water cannons, telescopes, net climbs, secret crawl-throughs, port-holes and various slides.

And the fun doesn't stop there as adventure seekers can visit Wags the Dog's Kennel Slide Tower, splash around in Henry the Octopus's Pop Jets, explore Dorothy the Dinosaur's Spray Garden or take a ride on the Big Red Car Slide. The whole family can even grab a bite to eat at the Yummy Yummy Cafe.

Major suppliers for Wiggles Water World include: FunWorks Design Group, New Braunfels, Texas (interactive play ship); Waterworks, International, High Ridge, Mo. (modular water play



systems); and Playtime LLC, Englewood, Colo. (waterplay structures).

"The Wiggles have touched the hearts of children for over 18 years and we are thrilled at the opportunity to bring this unique family experience to our water park," said Six Flags Atlanta Properties Park President Melinda Ashcraft. "Wiggles Water World is the first of its kind in North America and has made 2010 a very special season."

—Scott Rutherford



PHOTOS COURTESY SIX FLAGS WHITE WATER

Six Flags White Water debuted North America's first Wiggles Water World this summer. The new 40,000-square-foot area includes five interactive sections including the 25-foot-tall S.S. Feathersword play ship.

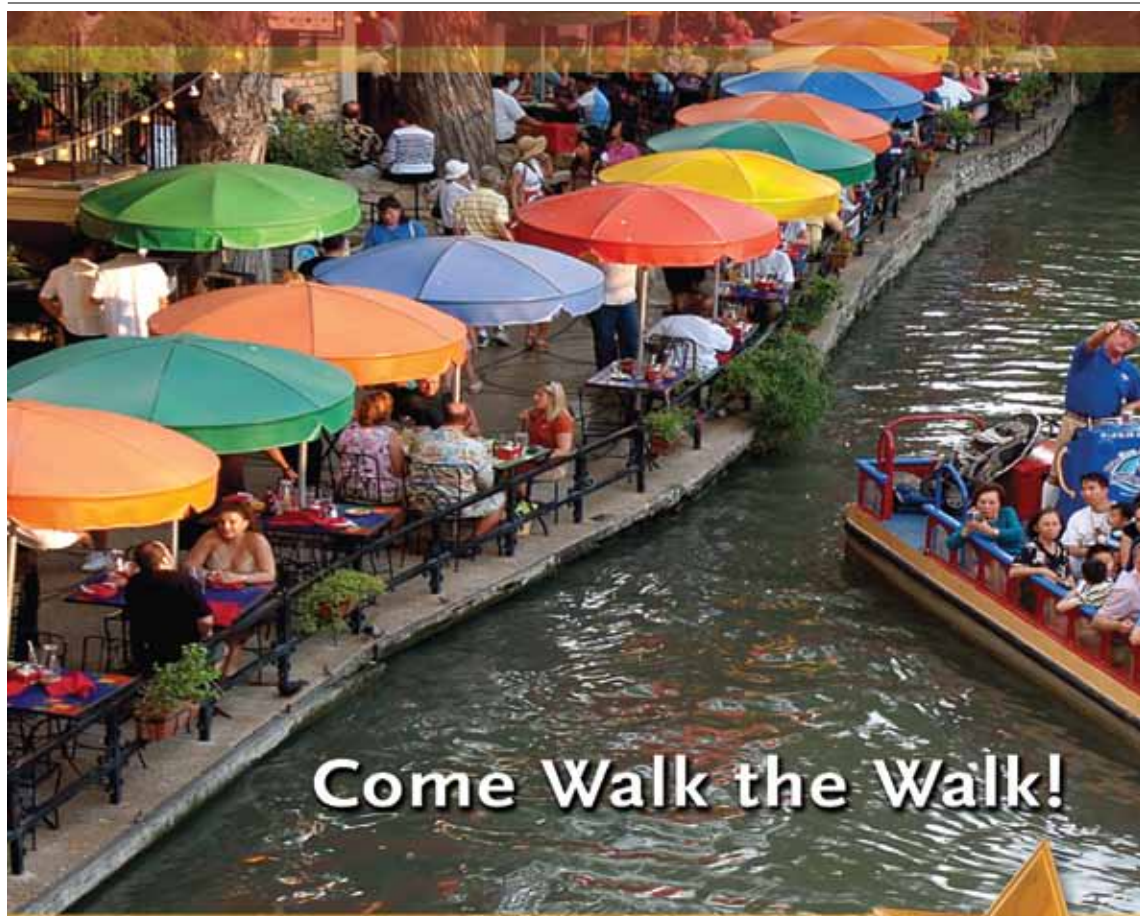
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Amusement industry associations in the news

Great Wolf Lodge Poconos hosts PAPA summer meeting

Annual scholarship program renamed to honor Barbara Knoebel

Mary Wade Burnside
Amusement Today

Barry Kumpf stepped down as first vice president of the Pennsylvania Amusement Park Association (PAPA) during the group's July 19-20 summer meeting at Great Wolf Lodge & Waterpark Resort in Scotrun, Pa.

Kumpf left his job at Lakemont Park & The Island Waterpark for one at the Blair County Convention Center in Duncansville, Pa., and therefore had to be replaced, said Buddy Knoebel, president of PAPA.

"What we did is we elevated Carl Crider, who was second vice president, into that position," Knoebel said. "Then we elected a second vice president, but we were only able to elect him on an interim basis. We have to wait until spring to make it official."

Brian Bossuyt of Camelbeach Mountain Waterpark in Tannersville, Pa., was elected to the position of second vice president, and members will make that official during the spring meeting, which will take place Feb. 28-March 1 at Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pa.

Knoebel was not sure what the attendance was during the meeting, but he said it was fewer than last year.

"I think that was at least in part because we usually try to bounce it around, but we ended up in the east two years in a row," Knoebel said. "Next year, we are looking to move into western Pennsylvania. We have some candidates — two parks — that we are going to ask to consider."

Knoebel did not want to disclose the potential parks until more plans have been made.

In other news, members also discussed the Parks and Carnivals Education seminar that will take place Nov. 8-11 at the Holiday Inn in Morgantown, Pa.

Gary Chubb, past PAPA president and now a member of the board of directors, oversees the PACE training seminar.

"The seminar is generally set up in two training tracks, one geared toward fixed-site locations and another track toward the traveling show industry," Chubb said. "We have not gotten to the point where we offer different class options. You're either going to take the traveling track or the fixed-park track."

The seminar is open to anyone — students do not have to be a member of PAPA or of the National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials, or NAARSO.

Anyone who holds a ride inspector certification in Pennsylvania must be re-certified every three years, Chubb said.

► See PAPA, page 26

IAAPA to take Expo to Orlando for next 10 years

Officials from The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) announced on August 3 the organization will host IAA-PA Attractions Expo at the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) in Orlando, Florida, for the next 10 years.

Prior to signing the new agreement, IAAPA Attractions Expo was scheduled to take place in Orlando in 2010, Las Vegas in 2011, and Orlando in 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2019. Now the Expo will take place in Orlando from 2010 to 2019, adding five years to the original agreements with Orlando.

The decision to move the Expo to Orlando through 2019 was driven by several important factors:

- IAAPA Attractions Expo attendees and exhibitors said Orlando is the preferred expo location.

- The Orange County Convention Center (North/South Hall) is the ideal building for IAAPA Attractions Expo in the U.S.

- Orlando is the unofficial capital of the theme park industry.

- Signing the long-term agreement will generate significant expense savings.

- Travel in and out of Orlando is accessible from throughout the world.

The decision to move

► See IAAPA, page 26

NEAAPA enjoys solid turnout for annual summer meeting

Santa's Village in Jefferson, N.H. played host for first time

Mary Wade Burnside
Amusement Today

About 80 members of the New England Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions (NEAAPA) attended their summer meeting Aug. 4 at Santa's Village in Jefferson, N.H.

"That is the standard number we get, not including the host facility attendees," said Alan Ramsay, the group's secretary/treasurer.

The day was more about getting together, meeting old colleagues, having some fun and casting an eye toward the upcoming get-togethers, both the monthly board of directors meetings that are suspended for a busy summer, the social gathering at this year's International Assn. of Amusement Parks & Attractions conference in Orlando, Fla., and then the big spring meeting, the time and location of which have yet to be determined.

"The meeting was great," said Cory Hutchinson, the group's first vice president as well as vice president of Fun-town Splashtown USA in Saco, Maine. "Our host at Santa's Village were over and above excellent. The park was amazing. It was a beautiful day. It was supposed to rain but it held off for us. We had a great turnout and we had a really

good time. We got to sample all the ice cream we wanted and the park held a full lobster bake with surf 'n' turf, which was excellent. It was really good stuff."

With the absence of the board's president, Greg Chiecko of Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Mass., Hutchinson was the highest-ranking board member attending the meeting.

The tradition of serving lobster during the summer meeting goes back to the first NEAAPA meeting held in 1926 at Crescent Park, Riverside, R.I., Ramsay said, "when a full shore dinner was served."

"NEAAPA traces its roots back to 1913 and was officially organized in 1926," he added.

The board of directors held a meeting during the day, but official business was not discussed, Hutchinson said.

"It's usually a light meeting," he said. "We don't get into things that are too hot and heavy."

Because New England amusement parks have such a short season — about 13 weeks, Hutchinson said — NEAAPA members do not hold monthly board of directors meetings in the summer and even getting away for the one-day summer meeting can be tricky.

After a summer hiatus, the board of directors will hold its next meet on Thursday, Sept. 9, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Worcester, Mass., Ramsay said.

► See NEAAPA, page 27

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James Reid-Anderson named new CEO of Six Flags; Al Weber named COO

Six Flags Entertainment Corporation (NYSE:SIX), announced on August 13 that James Reid-Anderson has been named the company's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately.

Reid-Anderson, 51, previously served as Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Dade Behring Holdings. Dade Behring emerged from Chapter 11 in September 2002 and under Reid-Anderson's guidance, Dade Behring established itself as a leader in customer excellence, innovation and shareholder value creation. In 2007, Dade Behring was sold to Siemens AG and following the completion of the transaction, Reid-Anderson

served as CEO of the Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics Division, and then was promoted to CEO of the Siemens Healthcare Sector and appointed a member of the Siemens Managing Board.

"Jim is an exceptional CEO, and he brings to Six Flags an outstanding track record of shareholder value creation," said Usman Nabi, Executive Chairman of the Board of Six Flags and Senior Partner at H Partners. "As past investors in Dade Behring, we understand the value Jim delivers to shareholders, and the board is confident that he will repeat this success at Six Flags."

Nabi continued, "I'd like to ac-

knowledge the tremendous work of Al Weber, who has served as Interim CEO over the last three months. Under Al's leadership, we've streamlined our operations and re-focused our organization on our core theme park business. Al's deep industry experience will complement Jim's capabilities."

Usman Nabi will continue to serve as a director and a member of the executive committee of Six Flags while Al Weber will transition to the role of Chief Operating Officer.

"I am very excited to be joining Six Flags' dedicated group of employees and to build upon the momentum already underway at the company," said Reid-Anderson. "With its strong port-

folio of theme parks and improved capital structure, the company is very well positioned for the long term. I look forward to enhancing the experience for our guests and continuing to build value for our stakeholders."

Prior to joining Dade Behring, Reid-Anderson held various financial and operational positions at Wilson Sporting Goods, PepsiCo, and Grand Metropolitan PLC, and currently serves as a director on the boards of Brightpoint, Inc. and Stericycle, Inc. He is a fellow of the U.K. Association of Chartered Accountants and received an Honors Degree in Commerce from the University of Birmingham, U.K.

►PAPA

Continued from page 25

Participants can attend for the first three days and get 24 hours of certification to re-certify as a Pennsylvania state inspector.

Also, "You can attend for an additional eight hours on the 11th and you'll get 32 hours of training, which is good for NAARSO re-certifications, because every two years, you need 32 hours of additional certification.

"This makes the PACE seminar Pennsylvania's only nationally-recognized ride safety seminar."

The seminar site alternates between amusement parks and those that cater to the traveling shows. "This year happens to be the traveling industry's turn to bring some rides," Chubb said.

Rides will be set up in the parking lot for hands-on

classes.

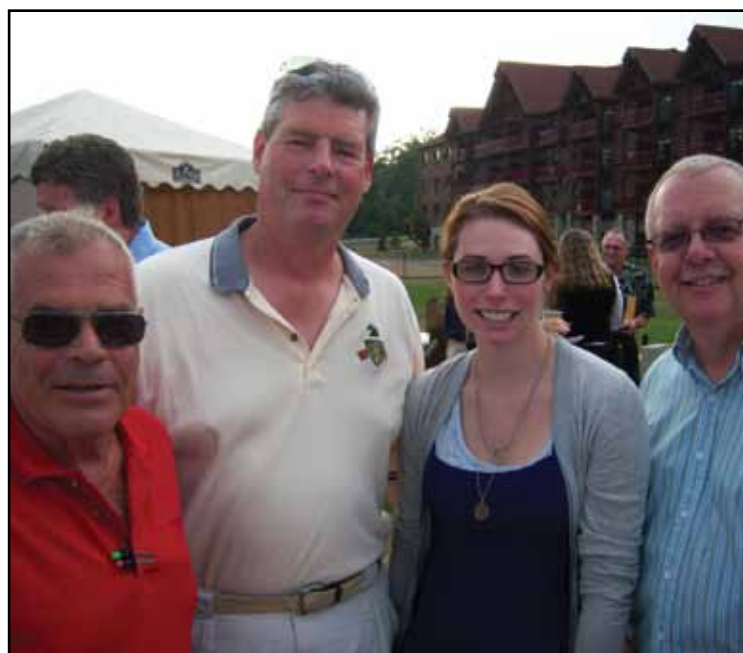
Topics that will be covered include roller coaster safety and electrical safety, although not all course topics have been selected yet.

"Sometimes we get involved in go-kart and go-kart track inspections, water slide inspections, basic ride inspection techniques and ASTM standards," Chubb said.

The cost of the ride safety seminar has not been determined yet, Chubb said, but he expects it to be in the neighborhood of \$200-\$250.

In other news, Rob Fulton, the president of the Pennsylvania Convention & Visitors Bureau, has become the new lobbyist for PAPA, taking over for Barry Wickes.

The meeting did not include a discussion of legislative issues facing PAPA. However, Fulton said, one issue PAPA members are deal-



AT PHOTOS / SUE NICHOLS

Taking time out to visit during the PAPA event were I to r: Dick Knoebel, Knoebels Amusement Resort; Tom Rebbie and daughter Janine, Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters; and Joe James, Haas & Wilkerson Insurance.

ing with is a 65 percent cut in tourism dollars in the state of Pennsylvania in the past two years, from \$33 million in 2008 down to \$10 million this year.

"That affects everybody," Fulton said. "With those funding cuts, there are less dollars going toward marketing amusement parks, restaurants, hotels. We're working on some tourism initiatives to get the funding increased."

Another legislative issue that PAPA wants to work on is a bill that would require schools to start after Labor Day.

"We'd like to have the schools start consistently after Labor Day, to help the employees for the parks and to let visitors extend their vacations. It's a pretty significant concept. It's something that has been working its way through the system."

Members also discussed the newly-named scholarship program that provides \$1,000 annual scholarships to four amusement park employees.

The scholarship program has been named the PAPA Barbara Knoebel Memorial Scholarship after Dick Knoebel's wife, who passed away from cancer last November, Chubb said.

PAPA member Tim Timco helps coordinate the scholarship program, which raises about \$2,500 through fundraising efforts and then also includes additional funds from PAPA.

"The winners are determined by an essay that each applicant writes, delineating their work experience in the amusement park industry and how that helps them with their career at hand as they go through their college years," Timco said.

►IAAPA

Continued from page 25

the Expo to Orlando was made by the IAAPA board of directors and supported by the association's executive committee and manufacturers and suppliers committee. Several members of the amusement industry applaud the Orlando news.

David Dean, owner of Joyland Park in Lubbock, Texas said, "Orlando is the theme park capital of the world, and as such, there is no better place to go. As an operator I can sample everything from FEC's to waterparks to the big themers. It's a great choice by IAAPA to go there for 10 years and I'm looking forward to it."

Dino Fazio, Morey's Piers in Wildwood, N.J., also applauded the move by IAAPA saying, "Orlando is the ideal location for the IAAPA Expo — it's the one place where you can truly experience virtually every facet of our industry, not to mention the amazing educational and benchmarking opportunities afforded by the variety of attractions in the area."

John Robinson of Ohio-based William H. Robinson, Inc. said, "Orlando is the hub of the Amusement Industry, I don't think anyone can really deny that. Internationally, nationally, ask anyone off the street where the center of theme parks, amusement parks, rides and family entertainment is... They're going to say 'Orlando!' without a moment's pause to think about it."

IAAPA Attractions Expo 2010 will take place in Orlando Nov. 15-19.



Fun, food and friendship were on hand during the PAPA Summer Meeting held at the Great Wolf Lodge. Shown here, I to r are: Steve Cohen, Wisdom Mfg.; Dick Franks, Bucktail Camping Resort; Carl Crider, DelGrosso's Amusement Park (1st VP of PAPA); Andy Quinn, Kennywood Park and Rob Fulton, new lobbyist for the Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau.

At right: It wouldn't be a NEAAPA Summer Meeting without lobster, as prepared this year by Santa's Village.

Far right: Santa's Village is proudly owned and operated by the Gainer family.

From l to r: Christian Gainer, Elaine Gainer, Mike Gainer, Melanie Staley and Nick Staley are shown in front of the park's newest attraction, Ho Ho H20. PHOTOS COURTESY NEAAPA



►NEAAPA

Continued from page 25

The next general membership event will be the Tom Morrow Social on Nov. 17 at Maggiano's in Orlando during IAAPA.

The event has been named for Tom Morrow, the longtime operations manager at Canobie Lake Park, who died of cancer three years ago.

"Tom was known as Mr. NEAAPA," Hutchinson said. "He was at every single meeting every single time. He brought a lot of cohesion to the group."

The annual spring meeting should be a time for discussing harder-hitting subjects, Hutchinson said. The date and place for that event have not been set, but the board is aiming for late March or early April 2011 as well as considering Rhode Island as the location. The past couple of years, the event has been held in western Massachusetts.

"We try to pick an area that is somewhat in the middle for everybody," Hutchinson said. "New England is a big place. When we have people coming from as far as New Hampshire and Providence, we try to find something in the middle. At the same time, we want to go to different areas of New England, so we're looking a little south."

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PEOPLE WATCH

Great Wolf Lodge announces promotions, additions

Great Wolf Resorts, Inc., based in Madison, Wisc. recently announced promotions and additions to its company.

Karina Addari has been promoted to general manager of Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas City, Kansas.

Addari is responsible for the successful daily operation and management of the 281, all-suite Great Wolf Lodge and its more than 300 team members. She brings nearly 20 years of experience to her new position.

Prior to her promotion, Addari was the director of food & beverage at Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound, Washington. Before joining Great Wolf Resorts, Addari was the director of restaurants at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida. Previous to that she held various managerial positions at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida.

James Keaveny has been named director of sales and marketing of Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine, Texas.

Keaveny is responsible for achieving occupancy and revenue objectives and directing the daily efforts of the field sales managers and public relations manager. Additionally, he is responsible for executing sales and marketing programs to generate visits from corporate meeting and group audiences, as well as leisure travelers.

Before joining Great Wolf Lodge, Keaveny was the vice president of sales with the Hunt Conference Group. With more than 28 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Keaveny has served in a national sales capacity for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, was director of sales and marketing at several Hyatt Regency hotels across the southwest and west coast regions in addition to director of sales at the Hilton Anatole Dallas.

Dutch Wonderland welcomes new team member

Dutch Wonderland, in Lancaster, Pa., announced the promotion of **Stephanie Good** to manager of ride operations.

Good began her career with Wonderland Amusement Management, LLC as a ride operator in 2000. She then became an assistant supervisor in 2003, a supervisor in 2004, and a lead supervisor in 2007, all seasonal positions within the rides department.

Good graduated from Millersville University in 2006 with a degree in education. She taught full-time as a secondary math teacher at Garden Spot High School until joining the Dutch Wonderland team full-time in July. In her new role, she is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Dutch Wonderland rides department.

**Good****ProSlide adds Lars Lenders to international staff**

ProSlide Technology, based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, is proud to welcome the newest member to the ProSlide team! Based out of Amsterdam, **Lars Lenders** will step into the role of business development manager for ProSlide's overseas projects. He will join the sales team, with Rick Hunter, Jeff Janovich, Phil Hayles & Frank Good, to further develop the company's presence in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Having worked with both manufacturers in the theme park and waterpark industry, Lenders will use the extensive experience he has gained from being in charge of leisure projects worldwide. "In fact, now that I have seen the various fields of leisure development, I look forward to combining this know-how in future waterpark projects," said Lenders.

**Lenders****Legoland Florida marketing team taking shape**

The bricks are falling into place at Legoland Florida as the first three members of the marketing team begin to market the first Legoland park on the east coast. Director of Sales and Marketing **Kim Isemann**, Manager of Sales **Todd Andrus** and Public Relations Representative **Jackie Wallace** are bringing their expertise from central Florida attraction destinations to promote the family theme park opening fall 2011.

Isemann brings considerable expertise in theme park and attractions marketing and will lead the estimated 20-person marketing team. She was formally general manager of the Daytona 500 Experience Attraction at the Daytona International Speedway. Prior to the Speedway, Isemann was with SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment.

Joining Legoland as the manager of sales is Andrus, a 13-year sales veteran from SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment where he was most recently the senior manager of national sales. Andrus' knowledge and contacts in the sales arena will prove invaluable to the first new theme park to be built in Central Florida in more than 10 years.

Wallace will be heading the communications efforts for the new park as public relations representative. With more than 10 years of theme park experience, Wallace comes to Legoland Florida directly from the promotions team at SeaWorld & Busch Gardens.

EMAIL PEOPLE NEWS TO: GSLADE@AMUSEMENTTODAY.COM

Riding the Market



This information is believed to be accurate, but is not guaranteed. Returns provided do not include reinvestment or dividends.

Company	Stock Name	Prices 08/16/10	High	52 weeks Low
STOCK EXCHANGE: NYSE, OTC BB*, NASDAQ**, SYDNEY ASX***				
Cedar Fair L.P.	FUN	\$12.32	\$15.79	\$6.03
MGM Mirage	MGM	\$9.95	\$16.66	\$7.60
Six Flags Ent. Corp.	SIX	\$33.73	\$42.00	\$31.85
CBS Corp.	CBS	\$14.13	\$16.98	\$9.57
Walt Disney Co.	DIS	\$33.66	\$37.98	\$24.89
Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.	WOLF**	\$2.06	\$3.95	\$1.80
Landry's Restaurants	LNRY	\$24.37	\$25.56	\$8.58
Blackstone Group	BX	\$10.38	\$17.22	\$8.93
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL***	\$2.30	\$2.54	\$1.10
NBC Universal	GE	\$15.46	\$19.70	\$13.03

Region (U.S.)	As of 08/16/10	Change from year ago
East Coast	2.977	0.290
Midwest	2.953	0.330
Gulf Coast	2.933	0.326
Rocky Mountain	3.011	0.378
West Coast	3.129	0.385
California	3.186	0.314

ON-HIGHWAY DIESEL PRICES

Prices per gallon; Information provided by U.S. Department of Energy

\$\$\$	TOP 7 MOST TRADED CURRENCIES
On 08/16/10 \$1 USD =	
0.78431	EURO
0.64152	GBP (British Pound)
86.22981	JPY (Japanese Yen)
1.05151	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.12059	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.04231	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BRIEFS

Cedar Fair completes refinancing of senior secured credit facilities

Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, based in Sandusky, Ohio, recently announced that it has successfully completed the refinancing of its existing senior secured credit facilities with new senior secured credit facilities (the "2010 senior secured credit facilities"), consisting of a \$260 million revolving credit facility and a \$1,175 million term loan.

"By successfully refinancing our debt, we accomplished two priorities: greater certainty within our capital structure and significantly enhanced financial flexibility," said Dick Kinzel, Cedar Fair's chairman, president and chief executive officer. "The fact that we were able to complete a transaction like this in an uncertain economic environment is a testament to the enthusiasm our lending partners have for our business model, growth potential and value creation. We truly appreciate the strong support of our relationship banks and the debt capital markets."

The refinancing significantly extends the maturities of the company's debt, with the revolving credit facility maturing in July 2015 and the senior secured term loan maturing in December 2016. "This financing provides us with long-term stability in our capital structure as our earliest debt maturity, the revolving credit facility, is five years out," added Peter Crage, Cedar Fair's corporate vice president of finance and chief financial officer. "In addition, we believe the new covenants offer us the necessary flexibility we need to successfully pursue our strategy, which includes continued re-investment in our parks, debt reduction, as well as distributions at an appropriate time in the future."

The interest rate for the \$1,175 million senior secured term loan will be LIBOR plus a margin of 4 percent per annum, with a LIBOR floor of 1.5 percent. The interest rate for borrowings under the \$260 million revolving credit facility will be LIBOR plus a margin of 4 percent per annum. The

2010 senior secured credit facilities are subject to customary affirmative, negative and financial covenants.

Amusement locations add Subway

The Subway restaurant chain, based in Milford, Conn., recently announced that it has added several food outlets within the amusement industry.

Recent openings include: Brean Leisure Park, Brean, England; KD Deutsch Riverboat Cruises, Rudesheim, Germany; Kuusamo Ski Resort, Ruokaturti, Finland; Valleyfair Amusement Park, Shakopee, Minn.; Worlds of Fun Amusement Park, Kansas City, Mo.

Minick announces new phone number

Bob Minick, president of Dallas, Texas-based Minick Associates announced that the design company has a new phone number. Effective immediately, the new number is (214) 228-5801. The company's address remains the same: Minick Associates, 8331 San Cristobal Drive, Dallas, Texas 75218.

• www.minickassociates.com.

Reliance, Universal eye India theme park

India's Reliance ADA Group is in talks with Universal Studios to build a \$1.5 billion, 400 acre theme park and resort in India, according to a recent report in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Reliance's Big Entertainment unit and Universal, a unit of General Electric Co's NBC Universal could reach a deal this year, although one person familiar with the matter warned the talks were at an early stage and could break down, the newspaper reported.

Reliance ADA is controlled by billionaire Anil Ambani.

The newspaper cited a source as saying that Reliance ADA would have full ownership of the venture but would pay Universal royalties and fees for using Universal-owned content.

Rocky Mountain Construction unveils new Topper Track technology

Design replaces aging top layers on traditional wooden coasters

Gary Slade

Amusement Today

Fred Grubb, owner of Hayden, Idaho based Rocky Mountain Construction Group recently shared with *Amusement Today* another wooden coaster technology that his firm has a patent pending on.

This new technology, called Topper Track, uses a steel box to replace the aging top two layers on traditional wooden coasters. According to Grubb, this technology has been in development for some time and was developed out of a need to reduce ongoing maintenance on existing wooden coasters.

Grubb shares his thoughts on the new Topper Track in this exclusive interview with AT:

Amusement Today: What is the purpose/benefits of introducing the Topper Track to the industry?

Fred Grubb: "To reduce wooden roller coaster maintenance significantly thus reducing the cost of maintaining the top wooden layers which are consistently having to be replaced.

What type of coaster should consider using it?

"Any wood coaster with a wood stack that is not rotted and is in reasonable shape could use this technology. When the wood stack finally does need to be replaced, this all steel Topper Track can be removed and reinstalled on a new wood stack.

How can this help if the coaster has ledger or track spreading/guage issues?

"The guage of the track will be set and held in place by the use of our all steel cross tie that is attached to the all steel Topper Track."

How does this track compare to the top two layers of wood for weight, longevity and, most of all, cost?

"The weight is about the same and the cost is a bit more



PHOTO COURTESY RMC

Rocky Mountain's new Topper Track was created to replace the aging top two layers of wooden coaster track bed, with a new longer lasting steel version.

than traditional wood track."

Can this track be added to just the portions of the coaster showing wear, or does the entire ride track have to be replaced?

"We can do portions or all of a coaster track meaning we can tie back into an existing track. We can pull the stack back into shape with this track taking out the washboarding and the roughness that exists on many of the wood coasters today."

Talk about your steel track and the welding process.

"We survey the existing coaster track and then build the Topper Track to our engineered prints. Traditional top two layer wood track is not this accurate. The steel rail that is used on a traditional top two layer track is bent on site using old-technology. With the all steel Topper Track we cut with CNC Automated Plasma Tables. This is cut to our exact design. Most welding is done with automation and is pre-inspected by a third party weld inspection firm.

"We believe customers will enjoy the smooth ride on the new track, where the worn out wooden track is becoming a very rough ride. Our running steel is replaceable, if at sometime years down the road it needs replacing. This is a simple operation for the park maintenance crew to do. The track is also painted thus giving the old ride a face lift if desired. It also reduces inspection time for the track on a day to day basis."

If the Topper Track is able to let the park use its current rolling stock — will this create extra noise, steel wheels on steel track? Do any adjustments have to be made to the

trains?

"The same trains used before can be used on this Topper Track. No modification needed to the trains."

Can the park install the Topper Track themselves or do you require RMC to do the install?

"The park can install the track themselves if they choose. RMC would provide supervision and training."

Is the Topper Track filled with anything like sand, the way some steel coaster are?
 "The track is filled with a design mix grout so the noise level is comparative to running on the existing track.

How much lead time does a park need to schedule for this type of install?

"The track fabrication and install together will not take any more time than replacing traditional wood track. The Topper track comes with a three-year warranty."

Do any modifications have to be made to the structure to install Topper Track?

"The Topper Track actually strengthens the existing track to a level stronger than when it was a new wood track. It will actually reduce the fatigue put on the structure, and as a result, it is strong and works as a unit.

"The track is pre manufactured in an environment that is conducive to this type of detailed work."

When and where will we see the first Topper Track installed?

"We will be installing a corner on the Tremors coaster at Silverwood Theme Park soon."

• www.rockymtnconstruction.com.

BRIEFS

Legoland Florida selects PCL as designer/builder

Legoland Florida has announced that it has chosen PCL Construction Services, Inc. (PCL) as the builders for Florida's newest family theme park. Legoland Florida opens in fall 2011 and will be a 145-acre interactive theme park dedicated to families with children between the ages of 2 and 12. With more than 50 rides, shows and attractions, Legoland is geared towards family fun.

"Merlin Entertainments Group is confident that PCL is the right company for this enormous job," said John Ussher, Legoland general manager of development. "PCL's quality standards, along with their attention to detail and incredible safety record make them our company of choice."

"We are committed to the success of Legoland Florida, and appreciate the confidence Merlin Entertainments Group has placed in our firm," said Deron Brown, PCL vice president and district manager. "PCL is thrilled to be awarded such a unique project," said Bob Hopfenberg, PCL's director of business development.

PCL is one of the top entertainment builders in the country according to *Engineering News Record Magazine*. With more than 200 entertainment projects completed by the Orlando district, PCL has a diverse and extensive design build and fast track entertainment background that includes rides, roller coasters, simulators, aquariums, restaurants, retail and support facilities for numerous major Orlando theme parks. PCL is a 104-year-old firm with 27 office locations throughout North America and an annual construction volume exceeding \$6 billion.

Due to the high-volume of interested sub-contractors, PCL has created a specific email address to collect proposals. All sub-contracting queries should be sent to PCL via the following email address: legolandinfo@pcl.com.

Hendrick Construction wins zoo contract

Hendrick Construction, Inc., based in Asheboro, N.C., won a contract to build five barns and expand the North Carolina Zoo's 37-acre African Plains habitat.

The project includes a rhinoceros barn, three hoof-stock barns and a treatment barn with connected paddocks and animal holding facilities. Hendrick Construction will also repair the exhibit's existing barns and complete the associated site work. The buildings will house rhinoceroses, gazelles, antelope and other plains animals.

The 11-acre expansion will feature extensive wood- and vinyl-coated fencing, as well as indigenous turf, plants and landscaping to control erosion and mimic the animals' natural environments.

"This project is next to occupied corrals and paddock areas, and the animals are very sensitive to heavy vibrations, loud noises and other distractions found on typical construction sites," said Jon Hattaway, project manager for Hendrick Construction. "Our work will require careful planning and consideration so we don't disrupt their daily routines."

Designed by Raleigh, N.C.-based Schema Architecture, the facilities incorporate a mix of construction techniques, including pre-engineered metal buildings with standing-seam roofs, a steel-pole barn, concrete masonry units and cast-in-place concrete walls.

The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2011.

Employee dress code eased at Disney parks globally

In its first major dress code policy change since 2000, when it okayed male employees to sport mustaches, the Walt Disney Company no longer requires female park employees to wear pantyhose with skirts unless they are part of a costume. Female company workers also are now allowed to wear Capri pants, open-toed sling-back shoes and sleeveless tops—as long as the straps are at least three inches wide. Men are now permitted to wear casual shirts untucked.

Announced in late May, the changes arose from a regular review of company employee guidelines as well as a comparative analysis of similar regulations at other major corporations. They are expected to impact mainly office and backstage workers at the parks.



NEWS & NOTES

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AIMS exhibits at IAAPA's Asian Attractions Expo

Mark Moore
Uremet Corp.
AIMS president
mark@uremet.com

AIMS International exhibited for the first time at the recently held Asian Attractions Expo held in Malaysia.



Moore

This was done at the suggestion of Charlie Bray (CEO / President) of IAAPA who organizes the annual show. Charlie was very adamant that Asia is starving for education in the amusement industry and that safety training is highly desirable. He thought it would be a good idea to exhibit this year to see what the reaction would be for the AIMS Safety Seminar.

I was able to combine the show with seeing some of Uremet's customers and personal time to test the idea of AIMS safety training in Asia. Timo Klaus of Kumbak Coasters was also planning on attending the show and was able to help man the booth. Jim Seay of Premier Rides was able to work in some pull-up banners with his promotion items to provide the banners at a good cost. IAAPA does several education classes at the show. Jim Seay was the speaker at one, and classes were twice the size as last year.

I am pleased to report that there is considerable interest in the AIMS Safety Seminar and certification program. I was pleasantly surprised how well known our seminar, education and certification program is in Asia and referred to as the bar setter. Many people came up to the booth to express that they had heard of AIMS and the high quality education AIMS is known for.

It was mostly the opinion that people from Asia would rather not travel to the U.S. but are very interested in attending a safety seminar in Asia. Even with the reluctance to travel, at least four people committed to traveling to Orlando this year for the seminar because they could combine it with the IAAPA Attractions Expo. This may change as more people learn that the seminar is being held in conjunction with the show.

The Chinese organization China Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions had heard of AIMS and has asked if I would do a presentation on safety education. I see this as a great opportunity to further promote AIMS in Asia and internationally. I am currently working out the details and will keep the AIMS membership up to dates.

All in all, the Asian Attractions Expo was beneficial to AIMS's future growth.

School already?

Patty Beazley
When Pigs Fly
AIMS seminar director
and educational chairperson
Beazley@comcast.net

Although you are reading this in September, I sit at my computer in early August with record-breaking heat listening and reading "back to school" commercials and advertisements. I find this ironic, as I know that most school kids are not ready to go back to school. There are definitely more "dog" days of summer to be had at the pool and furthermore, there is no crisp chill of autumn air to be found within the continental United States! As I was speaking with my 15-year-old niece, Sarah, concerning the beginning of the school year, she flatly exclaimed that she despises school. Even though she is a straight "A" student, she claims that the best part of school was seeing her friends and that her favorite activity is cheerleading. Hmmmm.... It made me think!

As our conversation continued, I explained that school is a necessity. In fact, learning is a life long pursuit. When we cease to learn, our careers and life opportunities have a tendency to diversify. And about that cheerleading? It's her passion. Passion is what drives us to do what we like the most.

To all of my amusement industry colleagues – what drives you? Did you major in Amusement Park Industry? No. Most of you probably had ideas of other career paths yet were consumed by your passion of working in the amusement industry.

By trade, I am in education. I received my Master's in Guidance Counseling and became a teacher and guidance counselor. How in the heck did I get into the amusement industry? Passion. Plain, simple, and with a fire.

Like many of us, I started as a seasonal employee at a local park, but I always had the passion to do more, do better and be the best that I could be. Upon becoming a full time employee at the park, I had heard of the AIMS organization, but thought it was an organization for only senior management. In fact, I didn't even attend an AIMS Safety Seminar until I was self-employed and upon the urgency of my business partner.

If I could change the hands of time, I would have insisted to my previous employer that I needed to be a part of AIMS to continue my education in the amusement industry!

I can honestly say that my first AIMS sem-



Beazley



inar was one of the best professional weeks of my life. To be in company with others who are as equally passionate about the industry was invigorating. And if you believe that the AIMS Safety Seminar is for senior management exclusively, let me rectify your thoughts. Senior management does attend, but the majority of our classes are driven for the front line and supervisors in operations, maintenance, aquatics, and inspectors. These individuals are the ones who deal with the issues, problems and opportunities of our industry on a day-to-day basis. In fact, the education committee keeps that in mind when we plan our yearly curriculum for the AIMS Safety Seminar.

The AIMS Safety Seminar is a 40-hour week of classes that also provides certification testing and continuing education credits in an amusement professional's chosen field.

Our certifications include Operations, Maintenance, Aquatics and this year, Inspections. We offer certificates of completion for the following curriculum tracks: Aquatics, Leadership, Certified Pool Operator, Mobile Shows, ASTM and Crisis Management. Our classes are taught by many of the top individuals in their field from the amusement industry that want to share their wealth of knowledge so you too can be your best. I guarantee that if you attend an AIMS Safety Seminar, you will learn. I encourage you to visit the AIMS Web site at www.aimsintl.org and review the classes that will be offered for the upcoming seminar.

This year, the AIMS Safety Seminar will be held in Orlando, Florida, November 13-18, 2010. Like my niece Sarah, I too enjoy being with old friends for the week and even learning something new. I hope to see you in November. In the mean time, I'm going to be watching a passionate cheerleader on Friday nights!



The AIMS booth at the Asian Attractions Expo.

AIMS improves audio visuals through silent auction

Each year AIMS conducts its annual safety seminar. This requires large quantities of audio visual equipment. Each year there is a certain amount of equipment that has to be replaced adding to the overall costs. In order to help defray the costs of this equipment while at the same time highlighting some of the companies that send people as students and instructors, AIMS conducts a silent auction of donated logo items. All proceeds from the silent auction go to the AIMS audio visual fund to help purchase and repair needed equipment to help make the classroom presentations as professional as possible.



The next AIMS Safety Seminar will be November 13-18 in Orlando, Florida during the IAAPA Expo. During this week AIMS will also conduct their silent auction. If you would like to highlight your company send logo or amusement items to the following address:

AIMS Silent Auction
1829 N. Richmond
Wichita, Kan. 67203

AIMS will inventory the items and artfully display them during the safety seminar so that your company and/or the person donating the items receive recognition. All items donated should be boxed and labeled "silent auction" and should be shipped to arrive prior to November 5, 2010. If you have any questions regarding the silent auction please contact the AIMS office at (714) 425-5747.

OBITUARY

Disney legend Harrison "Buzz" Price dies at 89

Harrison "Buzz" Price, the research economist who recommended Anaheim to Walt Disney as the location for



Price

Disneyland, then later recommended Orlando to Roy O. Disney as the location for Disney World, passed away Sunday, Aug. 15, at the age of 89.

"Despite his failing health, he continued to demonstrate his trademark humor, cutting edge wit and enduring love for family and friends," his son David Price said on behalf of his mother, Anne Shaw Price, and the Price family. "His legacy of laughter, wit, love, passion and commitment leaves its mark on each of us – family, friends and colleagues in the leisure and recreation industry he loved."

Encouraged by Walt Disney, Price formed Economics Research Associates (ERA) in 1958. Ultimately, he conducted 150 studies for the Walt Disney Company (including site and feasibility analysis for Walt Disney World in Florida and Tokyo Disneyland) and over 3,000 projects for other clients.

After selling ERA in 1969, most of Price's projects were under the aegis of his own Harrison Price Company, including studies for eight World's Fairs, Sea World, Knott's Berry Farm, Universal Studios, the Six Flags parks, museums, zoos and many feasibility analyses for international projects.

At the time of his death, after retiring in 2005, Buzz and Anne Price made their home at Mt. San Antonio Gardens in Pomona.



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BRIEF

Solano County Fair starts anew, minus horse racing

Making the Solano County Fair a "true county fair" as opposed to a fair with horse racing made the 2010 fair a completely different fair than the 2009 fair, according to officials.

That difference, officials said, was one of the reasons the fair saw a 28 percent dip in attendance this year compared to 2009. Attendance this year, which ran June 23-27, was slightly more than 35,000, compared to the approximately 49,000 fairgoers last year.

The fair ran a month earlier this year than last because horse racing dates didn't have to be put into the equation. The Solano County Fair board had announced at the end of 2009 it wouldn't feature live horse racing in 2010. The decision was based on declining attendance, revenue and horse population industry-wide.

Once that decision was made, moving the fair dates was a positive one.

"But, we still had a lot of competition," said Debbie Egidio, fair spokesperson. "We had three fairs going on within a 60-mile radius at the same time. But, we were happy with what we got."

Butler Amusements, Fairfield, Calif., fielded the midway this year. This was the carnival's second year.

Deggeller attractions, Salem Fair posting gains

Pam Sherborne
Amusement Today

Andy Deggeller, Deggeller Attractions, said the season has been going pretty well so far and the success of the Salem (Va.) County Fair, which ran July 1-11, has helped things run smoothly.

The Salem County Fair posted gains in both attendance and revenue for the second straight year in a row. Fair Manager Carey Harvey said 2010 attendance was more than 300,000 representing a nine percent increase of last year's attendance.

Gross receipts for rides on the midway also were up, with a reported 10 percent increase over 2009.

"We changed our layout a little this year," Deggeller said. "It was a good date for us."

Deggeller said the carnival fielded 35 rides at the Salem date.

"We're very gratified that we had this increase in atten-

► **See SALEM, page 34**



PHOTOS COURTESY SALEM FAIR

The Salem (Va.) Fair posted gains for the 2010 run with more than 300,000 in attendance. This is the second consecutive year the fair has reported increases in attendance. The fair, which ran July 1-July 11, reported a nine percent gain over 2009's event and management feels attendance would have been even larger if record high temps didn't plague the area for several days. Deggeller Attractions, Stuart, Fla., fielded the midway. The carnival reported a 10 percent increase in gross receipts. To address the high temps, carnival officials purchased large fans while in Salem and put them under the office tent for workers breaktime.



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On the Road

AT PHOTOS / SUE NICHOLS



The Sonoma-Marin Fair, Petaluma, Calif., had a good run this year with an approximate two percent increase in attendance over 2009. Brass Ring Amusements Midway of Fun, Oroville, Calif., provided the rides. Here are, from left, Eva and Harry Mason, owner of Midway of Fun, with Patricia Conklin, fair manager, and Vicki DeArmon, fair marketing director.



So far, so good for Christina and Kerry Benner in their first year as carnival owners with Penn Valley Amusements, Middleburg, Pa. They had been with Mid Valley Amusements, also based in Middleburg. Seen here at Highspire, Penn., are Christina Benner, second from left, with her children, Alycia, Chase, the oldest son, and Chance.



Butch Butler, right, Butler Amusements, Fairfield, Calif., had two back to back successes in his line-up of fairs with the Alameda County Fair, Pleasanton, Calif., June 23-July 11, and the California State Fair, Sacramento, July 14-Aug. 1. Seen here with Butler are Kurt Vomberg, unit manager, and Kelley Butler, Butch Butler's daughter and company food concession manager.



Brandi Snyder and Adam Brotzman, Snyder's Amusements, are continuing to let the good times roll even though 2010 business has been down somewhat for the carnival based in Greencastle, Pa. Donnie Snyder, show owner with his wife, Tammy (Brandi is their daughter), said spring and early summer dates have decreased from last year but as they enter into their fair season, things are looking a little better. Brandi Snyder and Brotzman are engaged. Here, they are standing on the midway at a fireman's bazaar in Shepherdsville, West Virginia.

SALEM

Continued from page 33

dance and I think a lot of that can be attributed to the fact that we didn't raise any prices on the ride wristbands in an effort to keep things affordable," Harvey Cutter said, after the fair. "We also extended ourselves a bit this year with advertising that attracted people from West Virginia, North Carolina, Richmond (Va.) and Charlottesville (Va.)."

Deggeller during the first week of August, they had been plagued with temperatures of about 100 degrees for about two weeks.

"Ever since July 4, it has been really hot," he said. "I think the heat does affect us some. People don't want to come out during the day. But, during the week, the average opening time is about 5 p.m. On the weekends, when we open earlier, we make sure we have water coolers spread throughout the midway. We have about 20 water coolers for that."

"When we were in Salem, we bought some of those big cooling fans," he said. "We put them under the office tent so our employees could come take a break from the heat."

Deggeller Attractions has made some purchases within the last year. Those include Wisdom's Viper and Orient Express that were bought in late 2009. During the winter of 2009-2010, the carnival purchased Zamperla's Tea Cups and a Banana Squadron by Advantage Rides.

In August, the show was scheduled to be at the Fredericksburg (Va.) Agricultural Fair, July 30-Aug. 8; Howard County Fair, West Friendship, Md., Aug. 7-14; Prince William County Fair, Manassas, Va., Aug. 13-21; Rockingham County Fair, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 16-21; and the Maryland State Fair, Timonium, Aug. 27-Sept. 6.



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Promotions, discounts turn it around for California State Fair

People are looking for discounts, promotions and value when deciding how to spend their money.

At least that is what Butch Butler, Butler Amusements, Fairfield, Calif., and officials at the California State Fair, Sacramento, quickly discovered when advanced tickets sales for the 2010 fair soared to record levels. Discount deals and packaged promotions pushed online ticket sales to more than \$1 million representing an increase of 16 percent over 2009, making it the highest ever.

And, there were other records set as officials reached out to the community with special offers in an effort to turn around a sliding attendance the fair has experienced over the last few years. It apparently worked. Unaudited figures show 741,189 people attended the California State Fair this year during its July 14-Aug. 1 run. That is a 10.1 percent increase over last year.

"And, we were very pleased with that," said Corey Egel, media center director. "We had projected 740,000, and we met and exceeded that. We feel we have a stopped a downward trend."

"People are looking for that bargain," Butler said. "I think as long as you go all out and don't hold back just because you think people aren't going to come, I think you will be all right."

The fair offered its traditional season pass this year, which permits unlimited access into the fair during the 19-day run. But, a new incentive was added this year. That incentive was unlimited access into Raging Waters waterpark during those same 19 days. Raging Waters is not part of the State Fair, but is located adjacent to the grounds. The season pass cost was \$29.99 and sales were up 400 percent over last year.

"The season pass sale was extremely popular this year," Egel said. "It had to be purchased before the fair started and could be purchased either online or at the box office."

Although not a new promotion, Kids' Day was more than just a little successful this year. Held on both Tuesdays of the fair, the promotion lets all children 12 years and un-

der through the gates for free. And, the majority of the rides are just \$1 for everyone. On the first Tuesday, July 20, fair officials saw 56,505 people come through the gates. On Tuesday, July 27, there were 73,363 in attendance, setting a record for the number of guests for a weekday.

"This is normally a good promotion for us, but this year it was amazing," Egel said. "The fair moved its dates up for this year by almost a month. In the past, we ran up through the Labor Day weekend. This year parents didn't have to worry about the kids being back in school."

A new promotion this year was the "Recession Special." Californians currently unemployed and receiving unemployment benefits were admitted free when they showed their unemployment check stub. Over 1,500 state residents took advantage of that promotion.

The California State Fair had announced prior to the event that all food vendors had to agree to lower their food prices by 25 percent in order to participate.

"We had nearly 100 food vendors this year," Egel said.

Butler said even with all the discounts, he was very

successful this year.

"Everything was up," he said. "Our rides were up and our food was up."

Butler Amusements had seven record setting days in the carnival. On the July 27th Kids' Day, the carnival sold 197,000 \$1 tickets.

Butler brought in 66 rides, including quite a few of his new ones such as the Orbiter by Tivoli. He was also able to show off some of his new LED lights, such as the starburst located in the bull's eye of his Giant Wheel. Rides4U, Somerville, N.J. installed these lights.

"That ride was up 50 percent this year over 2009," he said. "We also had a new entrance sign made and we installed LED lights on that as well. It was so bright. You just had to come into the midway after seeing that sign."

Butler said Rides4U also did his new sign.

Chestnut Identity Apparel / Amusementline, Brookdale, Calif., has done four rides in LED lights for Butler.

"I don't plan to put LED lights on everything, but on some key pieces," Butler said. "I grew up as a grocer. We put our bread and milk at the back of the store. Those were

► See FAIR, page 36



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FAIR

Continued from page 35

the things people wanted most, but to get there they had to walk through the store and maybe they would see something else. That is what I am doing with the rides with LEDs. I am placing them in strategic areas."

In exceeding projected attendance this year, Egel hopes the downward trend the fair has experienced is now something of the past.

"Our attendance has sort of fluctuated over the years, but has been sliding," he said.

Attendance in 2006 was 941,000. In 2007, it slid to 739,000, and came back up slightly in 2008 with 795,000. Last year, attendance dipped to 675,000.

Overall, with the California State Fair now behind him, Butler said he has been pleased with his fair season. He played the Alameda County Fair, Pleasanton, Calif., June 23-July 11. That fair ended on a very high note with an attendance of 418,000. That attendance was the second highest in 20 years, representing a 19 percent increase over 2008 and just a three percent decrease from 2009, which was the largest fair attendance yet.



PHOTO COURTESY CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR

The 2010 California State Fair was a success this year and fair and carnival officials attribute that success in large part to the number of promotions and discounts offered. The fair saw a 10 percent increase in attendance over 2009. Butler Amusements, Fairfield, Calif., saw the same gain on the midway. Here is Butler's Zipper, manufactured by Chance, on the midway of the CalExpo.

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North Dakota State Fair sets records

The North Dakota State Fair, Minot, drew the highest number of fairgoers this year since becoming a state fair in 1966.

There were 308,641 in attendance at the 2010 event, which ran July 23-31. The second largest year for attendance was set in 1983 with 300,790 people. The 2009 event drew 296,819.

In addition, for the first time in the history of the fair, both the Grandstand Country Showpass and the major rock concert (KISS) sold out. The Grandstand Showpass sold out with 16,000 Showpasses while KISS sold out with 15,082 fairgoers in attendance.



PHOTOS COURTESY NORTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR

The North Dakota State Fair, Minot, July 21-31, set a record at the 2010 event, drawing the highest number of fairgoers in the history of the fair. This year's event drew 308,641 people. Fair management is attributing the great success to hard work, weather, great entertainment and the new \$15 million grandstand. Record crowds turned out for grandstand entertainment. Murphy Brothers Expositions fielded the midway with more than 40 rides.

Renae Korslien, first year fair manager, attributed this year's success to her staff and the "magnificent new grandstand."

"Weather was certainly a factor in our high attendance," she said, "repeatedly dodging

the bullet from rain and wind that could have affected every major Grandstand show."

The new \$15 million grandstand was constructed in less than a year. It was funded by the state Legislature. And, there were other successes in

that new facility during the run. On opening night, Brooks & Dunn drew 14,863. Sugarland drew 14,200 on July 31.

Three non-musical grandstand events, such as a demolition derby and car show, were also successful.

Murphy Brothers Expositions, Tulsa, Okla., provided the midway with approximately 46 rides and attractions.

Commercial booth space sold out, with 650 commercial vendors on grounds.

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